Rittenhouse Case: The Lies and the Truth

The New American

THAT FREEDOM SHALL NOT PERISH

The Gift of *Life*

THE NEW AMERICAN
ISS 24 DEC 27 2021 $3.95US&CAN
51>
0 74470 16223 0

This Christmas

PLAN AHEAD. SHOP NOW!

The New American Binder

The perfect way to protect and preserve your copies of The New American magazine. Holds one full year (24 issues, 1/$14.95ea; 2-5/$13.95ea; 6-9/$12.95ea; 10+/$11.95ea) **TNABINDER**

The Life and Words of Robert Welch

Learn about Robert Welch, a man who could read at age two, entered college at 12, struggled to success in industry, and launched a movement that ultimately became the largest force against communism and collectivism in the entire world. (2020ed, 332pp)
HB (1/$19.95ea; 2-4/$18.95ea; 5-11/$15.95ea; 12-23/$12.95ea; 24+/$9.95ea) **BKLWRWHB**
PB (1/$14.95ea; 2-4/$13.95ea; 5-15/$10.95ea; 16-31/$8.95ea; 32+/$5.95ea) **BKLWRWPB**
HB and PB set (1/$19.95ea; 2+/$18.95ea) **SETBKLWRW**

Trumpworld

This special Collector's Edition of The New American commemorates the historical importance of the Trumpworld movement in placing Donald Trump into the Oval Office and the implications of its continuing influence on American life for the foreseeable future. (2021, $14.99) **BKTW**

The Robert Welch Presentations — SIX DVD SET

The Robert Welch Presentations capture the best of Welch's uniquely prophetic speeches from 1959 to 1974. These speeches established the philosophical foundation and grass-roots organization of The John Birch Society and provided the impetus for today's rapidly growing movement to restore freedom under the Constitution. The set includes six DVDs: 1. *The Life of John Birch*; 2. *An Intro to the JBS, What Is the JBS, and An Invitation to Membership*; 3. *The Touch of Sanity*; 4. *The Truth in Time*; 5. *In One Generation — Part 1*; 6. *In One Generation — Part 2, Look at the Score*. (2009ed, 553 total minutes, $29.95ea) **DVDSRWP**

Historical Prints — SET OF SIX

Includes three documents (Declaration of Independence, Bill of Rights, and Constitution) and two paintings, plus a "free" *Call to Arms* print. ($39.95ea) **HISPRINTS**

2022 JBS Calendar

Plan your activism with this new JBS monthly calendar. It includes available start and end dates for state legislatures and valuable coupon codes, exclusive to calendar buyers, for ShopJBS.org! Made in the USA! (2021 1/$7.95ea; 2-4/$6.95ea; 5+/$5.00ea) **CALJBS22**

Birchtionary — BOOKLET

Designed for John Birch Society activists, this booklet defines words and terms used by JBS members. Entries range from JBS "in-house" terminology to words pertaining to the globalist agenda that are relatively unknown to most Americans. Perfect for new members. (2018ed, 53pp, 1-9/$3.95ea; 10-49/$3.70ea; 50-74/$3.45ea; 75-99/$3.20ea; 100+/$2.95ea) **BKLTJBSB**

We the People Lapel Pin

(1/$7.95ea; 2-4/$6.95ea; 5+/$5.95ea) **JPINWTP**

JBS Eagle Lapel Pin

(1/$4.95ea; 2-4/$3.95ea; 5-9/$3.00ea; 10+/$2.50ea) **JPINJBSE**

JBS 60th Anniversary Pin

($4.95ea) **JPIN60**

TNA Ceramic Mug

(1/$14.95ea; 2+/$13.95ea) **MUGTNA**

JBS 60th Anniversary Chunky Mug

(1/$7.95ea; 2+/$6.00ea) **MUGJBSCH60**

JBS 60th Anniversary Ceramic Mug

($12.95) **MUGJBS60**

Straight Talk Mug

($2.95ea) **MUGSTRTT**

Hover your phone's camera over the smart code to order online.

Go to ShopJBS.org to order these and other gift ideas!

211227

Family Owned & Operated Since 1972

Clark's NUTRITION ® & Natural Foods Market

What does "family owned & operated" really mean? For the Clark family, it means getting up early for 45 years to work in their own community, and choosing to invest in the Inland Empire. In a time when Wall Street is trying to run Main Street, Clark's Nutrition still believes that family-owned and operated businesses are the backbone of the American dream, and feels privileged to help families live healthier and happier lives.

Selection - Staff - Experience - Affordability

SELECTION
Clark's has the largest selection of organic produce and supplements in the Inland Empire.

NUTRITIONAL CONSULTANTS
We have trained Nutritional Consultants to help assist you with whatever your health goals are. They're not on commission, and are here to help you "Live Better!"

WE ARE EXCITED TO MEET YOU! It is our company mission to provide customers with nutritional assistance that can really have a lasting impact on their quality of life. We look forward to meeting and serving you!

AFFORDABLE
Clark's goes to great lengths to make sure your family has what they need at an affordable price.

STORE TOURS
Come by any time and we will be glad to give you a personal tour and answer any of your questions.

CHINO
909.993.9200
12835 Mountain Ave.
Chino, CA 91710

LOMA LINDA
909.478.7714
11235 Mountain View Ave.
Loma Linda, CA 92354

RIVERSIDE
951.686.4757
4225 Market St.
Riverside, CA 92501

RANCHO MIRAGE
760.324.4626
34175 Monterey Ave.
Rancho Mirage, CA 92270

www.clarksnutrition.com

Ray & Carol Clark

Diamond M Ranch

REGISTERED & COMMERCIAL

HEREFORDS

Range Bulls, Replacement Females, Stocker & Feeder Cattle
(one or a truckload)

A Fifth Generation Ranching Family
Engaged In Accenting The Hereford Influence

Box 99
Laurier, WA 99146
Len: 509/684-4380
(Summer phone)

The Diamond M Ranch Family
Len & Pat McIrvin
Bill & Roberta McIrvin
Justin & Kaleigh Hedrick
Mathan & Natasha Knapp

646 Lake Rd.
Burbank, WA 99323
Len: 509/545-5676
(Winter phone & address)

"This is a republic, not a democracy — Let's keep it that way!"

The New American

Vol. 37, No. 24 December 27, 2021

Cover Story

LIFE

10 The Gift of Life
by Fr. James Altman — The most precious gifts are not those we give to each other but the gifts God bestows upon us, including the great gift of life.

13 Ending Abortion in America
by Robert M. Owens, J.D. — What started as a little-known local ordinance eventually became the controversial Texas Heartbeat Act, and may prove to be pivotal to ending abortion in America.

Features

POLITICS

19 Rittenhouse Case: The Lies and the Truth
by R. Cort Kirkwood — The media's false narrative beguiled many into viewing Rittenhouse as a murderer. But in court, it was the truth that mattered.

CLIMATE

24 UN COP26: Boosting China, Advancing Globalist Lockdown
by Alex Newman — Does it make sense to decimate the U.S. economy while boosting China? It only does when it's recognized that the goal of the global green regime is to shackle the planet, not save it.

HISTORY — PAST AND PERSPECTIVE

28 The Golden Age of Christian Art and Culture: From Dante to Dostoevsky
by Dr. Duke Pesta — Dante's *Divine Comedy* helped to usher in the Golden Age of Christian culture and civilization that in many ways Dostoevsky defended five centuries later against the coming juggernaut of materialism, atheism, and socialism.

FAITH, FAMILY, FREEDOM

41 Kenosha Jury Acquits, Despite Fears, Intimidation
by R. Cort Kirkwood

Departments

5 Letters to the Editor
7 Inside Track
9 QuickQuotes
27 The Goodness of America
39 Exercising the Right
44 The Last Word

GettyImagesPlus

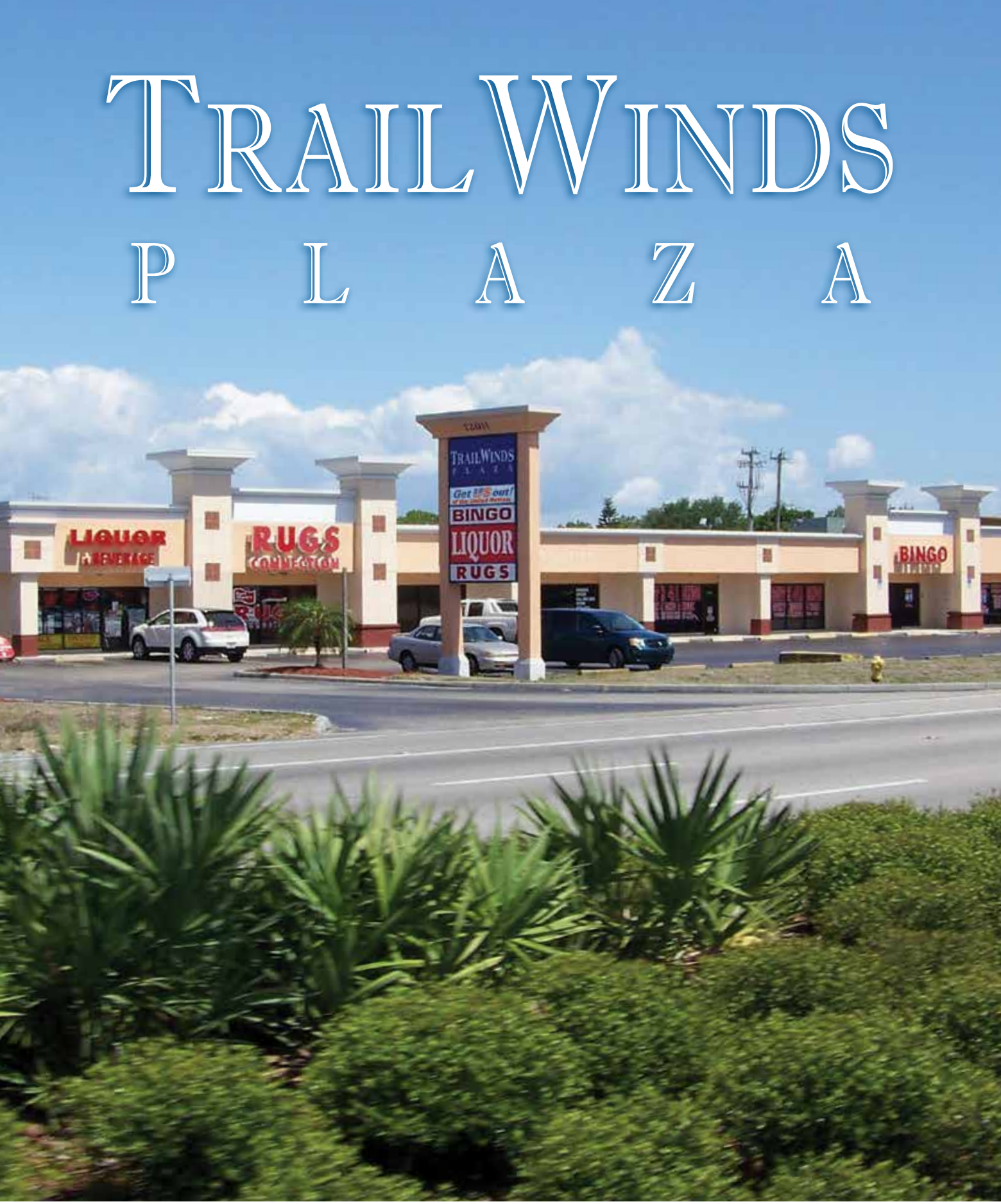
AP Images

AP Images

AP Images

COVER Getty Images Plus

TrailWinds Plaza



Cleveland Ave. (Rt. 41) | Ft. Myers, Florida | Stamra Inc.

Publisher
Dennis Behreandt

Editor-in-Chief
Gary Benoit

Senior Editors
William F. Jasper • Alex Newman

Managing Editor
John T. Larabell

Associate Editor
Larry Greenley

Contributors
Bob Adelmann • Steve Byas
Raven Clabough
Selwyn Duke • Brian Farmer
Christian Gomez • Gregory A. Hession, J.D.
Ed Hiserodt • William P. Hoar
R. Cort Kirkwood • Patrick Krey, J.D.
John F. McManus
James Murphy • Robert M. Owens, J.D.
Annalisa Pesek • Dr. Duke Pesta
Llewellyn H. Rockwell, Jr.
Peter Rykowski • C. Mitchell Shaw
Michael Tennant
Rebecca Terrell • Fr. James Thornton
Laurence M. Vance • Joe Wolverton II, J.D.

Creative Director
Joseph W. Kelly

Senior Graphic Designer
Katie Bradley

Graphic Designers
Lindsey McConnell
Nilai Lee

Research
Bonnie M. Gillis

Advertising/Circulation Manager
Julie DuFrane

The New American

Printed in the U.S.A. • ISSN 0885-6540
P.O. Box 8040 • Appleton, WI 54912
920-749-3784 • 920-749-5062 (fax)
www.thenewamerican.com
editorial@thenewamerican.com

Rates are $49 per year (Canada, add $9; foreign, add $27) Copyright ©2021 by American Opinion Publishing, Inc. Periodicals postage paid at Appleton, WI and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send any address changes to The New American, P.O. Box 8040, Appleton, WI 54912.

JBS.org

The New American is published twice monthly by American Opinion Publishing Inc., a wholly owned subsidiary of The John Birch Society.

Appreciating America

I have a unique opportunity with my company to interact with a wide variety of immigrants. The overwhelming majority of these interactions are with Nigerians and Jamaicans, mostly first- or second-generation black immigrants. Each and every time, they passionately describe their absolute love for America, what it represents, and the unlimited opportunities it provides. They are amazed with how kind and helpful Americans are in providing opportunities with hard work and personal responsibility. Several of these individuals have started companies and have employees. They cannot understand why people speak so poorly of America and the perceived racism that is supposedly holding these American-born people back. These amazing immigrants articulate how they bring their children back to their homelands to show them how blessed they are to live in America. They say that they need to make sure their children experience and see what they left so it will make a permanent impression on them.

The latest example of these wonderful immigrants is Winsome Sears, the next lieutenant governor of Virginia. Her story is amazing, and should be highlighted on every news station across the country. Sears is an immigrant from Jamaica and a former U.S. Marine. She co-chaired the African-American Committee and the Advisory Committee on Women Veterans to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, has a master's degree, is director of a women's homeless shelter for the Salvation Army, and has many more amazing attributes. One just needs her to speak for a few minutes to hear her love for America and the amazing opportunities it provided her and her family.

The freedom and unlimited opportunity we have in America has never been experienced elsewhere. We have people willing to die to trying to get into our country. We need to stop blaming other people for our life situations and take personal responsibility for our decisions. We have our "leaders" trying to divide our society into groups, agitating them and trying to pit one group against another. They then say they can fix this if we elect them and give them even more power. Reject this attempt to divide us as a nation! Working hard, showing up to work on time, showing initiative, and taking responsibility for your actions will guarantee success in America.

Chris Zubyk
Malvern, Pa.

Disarming Americans

Socialist governments are highly oppressive and cannot risk an angry, armed citizenry. Knowing that criminals ignore gun laws, fascist governments use gun control to restrict and suppress normally peaceful people who are not a threat to public safety. Fascists traditionally have used two main tactics: 1) registering and/or licensing gun owners, and 2) limiting the selection and/or availability of guns and ammunition.

An insidious new tactic has been developed in the United States: prosecuting people for using a gun for self-defense. In July 2020, thugs violently broke in to Mark and Patricia McCloskey's gated neighborhood and verbally threatened to kill them and burn their house. The government prosecuted the McCloskeys, not the thugs, simply for holding guns to defend their home against this violent mob. In August 2020, Kyle Rittenhouse had to defend himself against several violent, rioting thugs who chased him and assaulted him — and even pointed a gun at him. Only when attacked did he shoot, purely in self-defense.

As with the McCloskeys, the government prosecuted Rittenhouse for defending himself, even claiming that having a gun negates a self-defense claim! Malicious government prosecution with unlimited resources warns peaceful people that using a gun to defend oneself against violent thugs may ruin your finances and even your life.

Evading our Constitution, Democrats cleverly developed this additional tactic, supplementing those used by their role models Mussolini and Hitler as documented in the section "Gun Control" of democraticfascist.com

Marvin Mathiak
Sent via e-mail

Send your letters to: The New American, P.O. Box 8040, Appleton, WI 54912. Or e-mail: editorial@thenewamerican.com. Due to volume received, not all letters can be answered. Letters may be edited for space and clarity.

SENOX®
CORPORATION

Serving the Seamless Gutter Industry Since 1972

Quality Products

Quality starts at the beginning. From the selection of materials, through the painting process, and on through manufacturing, producing the highest quality part is our first priority.

Industry Leaders

Since 1972, we've been providing innovative solutions to the seamless gutter industry through expanded product lines, quality control, and the most State-of-the-Art equipment.

Superior Service

We are fully committed to fulfilling the needs of seamless gutter contractors every day with reliable parts, coupled with quick and accurate service.

"We are called the nation of inventors. And we are. We could still claim that title and wear its loftiest honors if we stopped with the first things we invented, which was human liberty."

– Mark Twain

www.SENOX.com **866-522-1696**

Woke Bot Sounds Alarm When Detecting Offensive Speech

An electronic thought-police bot going by the name "Themis," intended for classrooms and social settings, is designed to detect and interrupt "offensive" remarks.

This is not satire, though it is often hard to tell in today's world. Themis, named after the Greek goddess of justice and social order, is an actual product invented by an actual person who, it appears, markets it with an actual straight face.

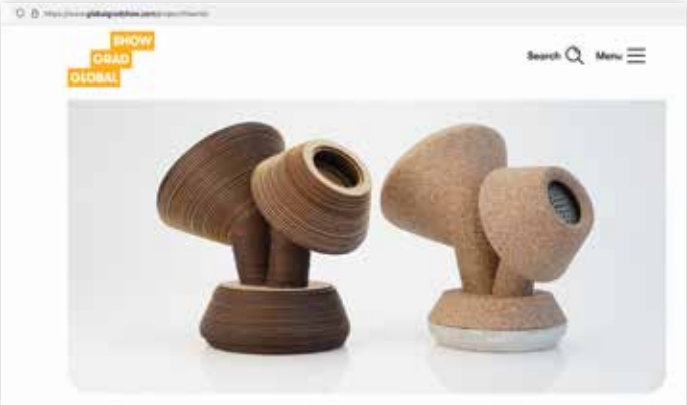
"The thought police have arrived," writes the U.K. *Telegraph*, reporting on the behavior bot. Themis relies on "extremely bothersome alarms" that last "approximately two minutes," as the *Telegraph* also relates, that are intended to warn the transgressor and provoke discussion.

As the paper wrote November 13, "Trigger warnings have been built into a new device developed for classrooms and social gatherings that sounds an alarm when it detects offensive language and jokes. The lamp-sized gadget is an attempt to 'manifest political correctness as an ideology into a product', developers have said, and it is being trialled for potential use as a tool to moderate debate in settings like UK schools and universities. Branded the 'Themis', the device is intended to be placed amid a debate setting and to emit a warning when it is triggered by the sound of banned language, racial terms and comments about body image."

As ridiculous as Themis sounds, it's not just being "trialled," but there's also "a view to a wider roll-out soon," reported the *Daily Mail* on November 14.

You can bet the bot won't sound the alarm over using the Lord's name in vain (now a staple of Hollywood movies) or bloviating on about "white rage" or "white male tears." Just don't say Bruce Jenner isn't really a woman.

There is a solution, a Nordic one, for dealing with this troublesome perversion of a Greek goddess: Themis, meet the hammer of Thor — and thou shalt buzz no more.



Archbishop Calls on People to Unite Against "New World Order"

Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò, the Italian prelate well-known for his criticism of Pope Francis and opposition to globalist schemes, issued on November 16 a dire warning and a powerful clarion call.

A "global coup d'état" is taking place, he stated, for the purpose of effecting the "Great Reset," a movement toward the "New World Order."

To combat this, Viganò implored, it "is necessary to form an international Anti-Globalist Alliance, which gathers all those who want to oppose the dictatorship, who have no intention of becoming slaves to a faceless power, who are not willing to cancel their own identity, their own individuality, their own religious faith."

Carlo Maria Viganò

AP Images

"If the attack is global," he continued, "the defense must also be global."

Titled "APPEAL FOR AN ANTI-GLOBALIST ALLIANCE," the letter opens saying: "FOR TWO YEARS NOW we have been witnessing a global coup d'état, in which a financial and ideological elite has succeeded in seizing control of part of national governments, public and private institutions, the media, the judiciary, politicians and religious leaders…. It is the Great Reset of the World Economic Forum, the Agenda 2030 of the United Nations. It is the plan of the New World Order, in which a Universal Republic enslaves everyone and a Religion of Humanity cancels Faith in Christ."

Viganò issued a call to action in the latter part of his appeal, stating: "This Anti-Globalist Alliance will have to bring together the Nations that intend to escape the infernal yoke of tyranny and affirm their own sovereignty, forming agreements of mutual collaboration with Nations and peoples who share their principles and the common yearning for freedom, justice, and goodness…. Let us found this Anti-Globalist Alliance, let us give it a simple and clear program, and let us free humanity from a totalitarian regime that brings together in itself the horrors of the worst dictatorships of all time. And may Almighty God assist us and protect us."

Coastlines Expanding Globally, According to Study

A new study shows that, despite modest sea-level rise over the last century, satellite data is showing that, globally, coastlines seem to be expanding instead of retreating.

"Prograding" is the scientific term for when a coastline advances toward the sea as a result of the accumulation of waterborne sediment, and that seems to be what is occurring. Satellite data compiled from 1984 to 2019 from the Landsat Series appear to show that, globally, coastlines are expanding at a rate of 0.26 meters per year.

Researchers at the University of Queensland's School of Earth and Environmental Sciences in Brisbane, Australia, admit that there's more work to do in order to validate their findings, but they believe that their method shows great promise in exposing actual threats to coastlines, as opposed to ones made up by the global-warming zealots.

oversnap/iStock/Getty Images Plus

"Although it requires further validation, the global application of our method demonstrates the significance of this approach in identifying potential threats to coastal zones, especially in complex tide-dominated environments, which can facilitate effective coastal management," the research team explained in their abstract of the study, released in the November 2021 volume of the *ISPRS Journal of Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing*.

The numbers aren't very big, but they do show a net expansion. According to the researchers, Australia's coastlines are expanding at a rate of 0.10 meters per year, Asian coastlines are expanding at a rate of 0.64 meters per year, Europe's coastlines are growing at a rate of 0.45 meters per year, and Africa's coastlines are expanding at 0.31 meters per year.

One continent appears to be receding slightly — but, again, the numbers are extremely small. North America lost 0.29 meters per year over the time frame observed. South America showed no noticeable change at 0.0 meters per year.

It's more affirmation of several studies that show terra firma may not be in quite as much danger from sea-level rise as climate hysterics are claiming.

Notre Dame Cathedral Could Become a Woke Theme Park

Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris narrowly survived being destroyed by a raging inferno on April 15, 2019. Now it appears that what the fire failed to do may be accomplished by those responsible for its renovation. Under controversial "restoration" plans seen by the U.K. *Telegraph*, the French Gothic structure, which has stood for more than 800 years, will be remade into a "politically correct Disneyland."

As the *Telegraph* reported November 26, the world-famous cathedral will be turned into an "experimental showroom" devoid of anything truly religious or truly beautiful. From the *Telegraph*:

> Under the proposed changes, confessional boxes, altars and classical sculptures will be replaced with modern art murals, and new sound and light effects to create "emotional spaces."
>
> There will be themed chapels on a "discovery trail", with an emphasis on Africa and Asia, while quotes from the Bible will be projected onto chapel walls in various languages, including Mandarin.
>
> The final chapel on the trail will have a strong environmental emphasis.
>
> "It's as if Disney were entering Notre-Dame," said Maurice Culot, a prize-winning Paris-based architect, urbanist, theorist and critic who has seen the plans.
>
> "What they are proposing to do to Notre-Dame would never be done to Westminster Abbey or Saint Peter's in Rome. It's a kind of theme park and very childish and trivial given the grandeur of the place," he told The Telegraph.

The *Telegraph* cites a senior source close to the renovation as saying, "This is political correctness gone mad. They want to turn Notre-Dame into an experimental liturgical showroom that exists nowhere else whereas it should be a landmark where the slightest change must be handled with great care." ■

sacratomato_hr/Wikimedia Commons

AOC Angered After Not Being Invited to Campaign for Democrats Who Lost in Virginia

Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez
flickr/nrkbeta

"Not a single person asked me to send an e-mail, not even to my own list. And then they turn around and say it's the fault of me and my followers who caused their defeats. I think it was communicated quite expressly that we were unwelcome to pitch in."

New York Congresswoman **Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez** *believes she could have helped Virginia Democrats who lost races for governor, lieutenant governor, attorney general, and numerous seats in the House of Delegates. But the Democratic leaders in Virginia obviously felt that her presence and her strident socialism would have harmed their candidates' chances of victory even more.*

NYC Will Allow Non-citizens to Vote in Municipal Elections, Protests Arise

"Someone who has lived here for 30 days will have a say in how we raise our taxes, our debt, and our long-term pension liabilities. These are things people who are temporary residents should not have a say in."

The new law, which will not apply to statewide or congressional elections, has opponents such as New York City Council Member **Joseph Borelli**. *Others who don't approve of the plan worry that the privilege to vote in municipal elections will be followed by extending voting rights to other categories of voting.*

Jennifer Granholm
U.S Department of Energy

Secretary of Energy Caught Not Knowing How Much Oil U.S. Burns Every Day

"I don't have that number in front of me. Sorry."

Biden's choice to run the Department of Energy, former Michigan Governor **Jennifer Granholm**, *boasted that President Biden's release of 50 million barrels from strategic reserves was a significant response to rising gasoline prices. When told that the extra oil could be consumed in fewer than three days, she responded with a mere nod of her head and dead silence.*

Escalating Inflation Worries Conservative Columnist

"On Monday, November 15th, Biden signed the $1.2 trillion infrastructure bill. He and congressional Democrats are pushing to spend nearly $2 trillion more on the so-called Build Back Better plan. Some in the media are now contending that rising inflation is something to celebrate. There was a time when you had to tune into a comedy show to hear an argument like that."

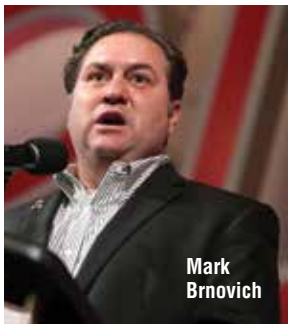
Boston Globe *bigwigs allow columnist* **Jeff Jacoby** *space in their extremely liberal publication for occasional sound perspective. His sensible thoughts, such as those above, appear among the far-more numerous plaudits for nonsensical and dangerous proposals authored by liberal colleagues.*

Former Trump Administration Official Urges United States to Stay Out of UNESCO

"I don't think UNESCO is fixable. During the Trump Administration, it was 'Make America Great Again.' In the Biden administration, it's 'Humiliate America Again.'"

After serving in both the George W. Bush and Donald Trump administrations, **Kevin Moley** *knows enough about the corruption, pro-communism, and anti-Americanism within UNESCO to strongly recommend that the United States not rejoin the UN's Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.*

Arizona Attorney General Defends Parental Right to Oppose School Indoctrination

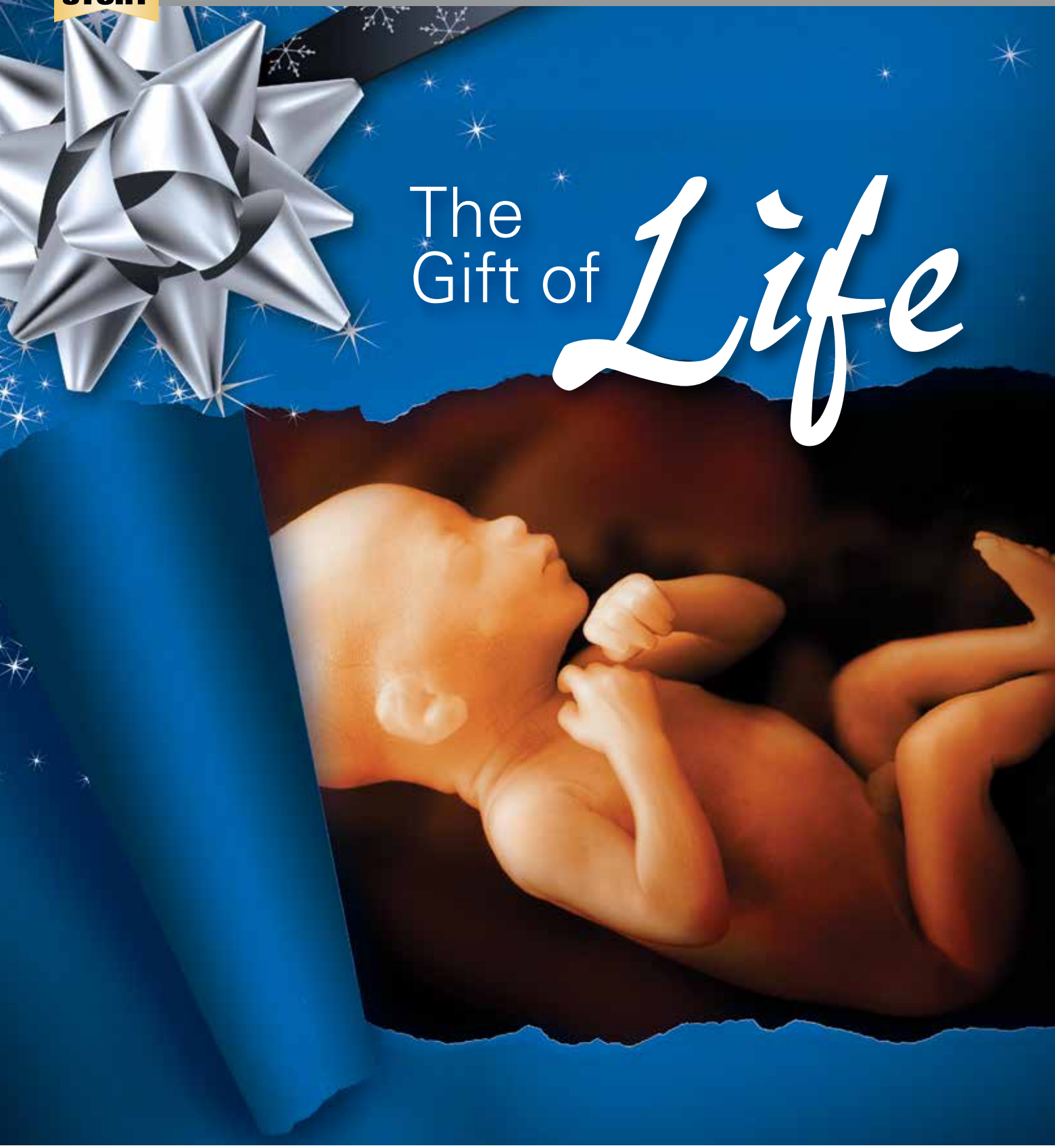

Mark Brnovich
Gage Skidmore

"Parents have a First Amendment right to assemble, and speak, in order to question the decisions public officials are making — especially when it involves the well-being of their children."

Angered at discovering the misconduct of one school-board official, Arizona Attorney General **Mark Brnovich** *has requested an immediate federal investigation into potentially unlawful activity, including the gathering of names of outspoken parents and their children.* ■

— Compiled by John F. McManus

The Gift of *Life*



The most precious gifts are not those we give to each other but the gifts God bestows upon us, including the great gift of life.

by Fr. James Altman

Not long ago, a nephew of mine became the godparent of a newborn boy. There is a picture with the family relaxing before heading to the baptism. My nephew is holding the precious baby lying outstretched in his lap. The baby is looking up into the face of his godparent. Neither were wearing masks. In that moment of real humanity, both were radiant. In that simple, profound picture, we see the gift of life expressed as God intended it to be expressed.

It goes without saying that one need not be a Catholic, a Protestant, or a member of pretty much any other belief system, to fully appreciate the gift of life. Nor does one need to be immersed in any particular culture over the past 4,000 years since Abraham. Appreciation of the gift is intrinsic in all humanity, in all times and places. The rule is that there never has been any societal or cultural confusion about this gift. I only can be immeasurably hostile toward any contrarian who comes up with some obscure "exception" to the rule, as if that proves anything. The simple fact is that until the last century and the onset of communism/socialism, in all times and in all places, the gift of life was appreciated, reverenced, and celebrated.

It certainly was appreciated, reverenced, and celebrated 2,000 years ago when the Angel of the Lord appeared to the shepherds and proclaimed to them good news of great joy — for all people — that the Savior was born in the City of David. How can we possibly grasp the refulgence of that moment when the multitude of Heavenly Hosts appeared and joined the Angel in praising God, saying "Glory to God in the Highest!" The Heavens proclaimed the greatness of the newborn Messiah.

Surely that was among the greatest proclamations in history of the gift of life. But go back nine months earlier to the Annunciation, when the Archangel Gabriel said to the Virgin Mary, "Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus." The Archangel certainly delivered a message specifically on the gift of life, a gift upon which human history would turn. Humanity would be transformed by Mary's fiat, her assent to conceive a Son, to bear a Son, to give birth to a Son who is Christ the Lord.

We could go back further, to an example from the great King David. Remember how David was shaken upon hearing that his rebellious and betraying son had been killed. "My son Absalom! My son, my son Absalom! If only I had died instead of you, Absalom, my son, my son!" (2 Samuel 18:33) In his most profound lamentation, David bewailed what once was a gift of life to him, but was no longer.

We even could go back further, to Abraham, our father in faith, and the great appreciation, reverence, and celebration that he and his wife, Sarah, had for the gift of life for which they longed, and that was given in their beloved son Isaac, who begat Jacob, who begat 12 sons, including Joseph.

We have 4,000 years of appreciation, reverence, and celebration of the gift of life. Thus we only can be completely bewildered by the rapidity by which the godless, the selfish, the worldly not only do not appreciate, reverence, or celebrate the gift of life, but have so quickly succeeded in "legalizing" the slaughter of this great gift. Moreover, they have so quickly succeeded in denigrating those who conceive, bear, and give birth to precious children. Such denigration perhaps reached its epitome when even Pope Francis let it slip that Catholics "should not breed like rabbits." Memo to Pope Francis: Go back and read about Jacob and his 12 sons. God plans parenthood, Francis. Each child, including Jacob's 11th, has a purpose in God's plan and it is not for mere man or woman to interfere with that plan through any artificial means, or through murder of innocents in the womb, or now, in the most staggering proposition, through infanticide after birth.

Since the days of Abraham, the entire Christian world had been in concordance with this premise until along came the Anglicans and their seventh Lambeth conference, which took place in 1930.

It goes without saying that one need not be a Catholic, a Protestant, or a member of pretty much any other belief system, to fully appreciate the gift of life.

Father Altman at a family bonfire holding a precious gift from God

Fr. James Altman is a priest of the Catholic Church, ordained in 2008. He was admitted to the Bar in 1991, and as a lawyer constantly worked to rescue children from neglect and abuse. He remains deeply devoted to protecting the most innocent.

During the Advent season, through which we prepare our hearts and minds and souls once again to celebrate the conception and birth of God made Man, who dwelt among us, let us re-resolve to end the abomination that takes the gift of life.

Denis-Art/iStock/GettyImagesPlus

Memo to the godless who have taken control, however temporary: Get it straight. Almighty God, the Author of Life, decides when there are too many people on the planet *He* created, not you. Your corruption of data regarding the "impact" of humanity on the planet is as corrupt as those who promote the slaughter of innocents. It is telling to note that the loudest voices, and the money/power behind those voices, all emanate from the densest population centers. However, having traversed the country over the past five months, coast to coast, north to south, it is readily and abundantly clear that there is plenty of space to support those 60 million innocents already slaughtered, and countless more in the future.

Whatever fallacious and ridiculous arguments they try to make against the gift of life, the diabolical underpinnings of each are laid bare in the gaze of a newborn lying in the lap of his godparent.

Prior to becoming a priest, I wanted to bring the gift of life to 13 children — a baker's dozen. It was not to be. God's ways are above our ways, His thoughts above our thoughts. But I did not need to bring 13 children into the world to appreciate, reverence, and celebrate the gift of life. Kind parents everywhere graciously let me embrace their precious babies and bless them. Recently one little guy was wide awake at a family bonfire and then fell asleep in my arms. To me it was a gift from Heaven, dear family, an unexpected but profound gift — the gift of life in which I could share. You see God's tangible glory in the gift of life of me holding that precious baby.

It is not a foolish approach to life to celebrate its true beginning — from conception — just as we celebrate Jesus' conception in the womb of the Blessed Mother of God. As a chaplain at a high school, I taught this through the life lesson of the T-Rex. Jesus did not come as a T-Rex and eat us; Jesus came as *one of us*, and consecrated every aspect of the gift of life, verily from conception to death, to redeem us. How dare we presume to be like gods, taking upon ourselves control over life after conception, and cut it short! How dare we deny this precious gift from God through the terrible crime of abortion!

Of course, the godless do not have reference to the transcendent and thus have no reference to a specific "God is the Creator, we are the created, He commands, we obey." But again, the entirety of human history, in all times and places, in all cultures, testifies to the sanctity of the gift of life. This is known as the Natural Law, which, as we know, was written into our hearts. Thus there is no excuse for the modernist, selfish, self-centered, self-indulgent relativism that proposes each may decide for himself or herself what is true and what is false. The absurdity, the preposterousness, of moral relativism readily is apparent to anyone who uses his or her brain. Perhaps it is most apparent in the utter disintegration of society, where the cohesion of Truth is lost. George Orwell well understood and elucidated this in his literary works of warning.

As to the gift of life, there is no relativism — only absolutes. We are conceived as boys or girls, and every cell in our bodies identifies us as such every moment of our lives. We celebrate the conception and birth of boys and girls — nothing else — and the modernist/relativist issue of gender identity and the use of restrooms and locker rooms instantly could be resolved by putting "XY" and "XX" on the doors. Boom. Problem solved. People with a brain celebrate two sexes and two sexes only, and do not, in any way, shape, or form, approve of self-deception and/or self-mutilation through faux transgenderism. Anyone who doesn't understand that needs his head examined.

During the Advent season, through which we prepare our hearts and minds and souls once again to celebrate the conception and birth of God made Man, who dwelt among us, let us re-resolve to end the abomination that takes the gift of life and — without even needing to go into the incomprehensibly gruesome details — kills it before birth, or mutilates it after birth.

God bless you all this Christmas and always. ■

Ending Abortion *in America*

What started as a little-known local ordinance eventually became the controversial Texas Heartbeat Act, and may prove to be pivotal to ending abortion in America.

AP Images

Standing up for life: Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton addresses a pro-life rally in front of the U.S. Supreme Court, which allowed the Texas heartbeat law to go into effect prior to making a final decision on the case.

by Robert M. Owens, J.D.

"The Court's order is stunning." Included in the dissenting opinion of liberal U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor, this sentiment underscores the significance in the advancement of pro-life legislation passed in Texas and recently upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court. The brainchild of attorney John F. Mitchell, Senate Bill 8, known as the Texas Heartbeat Act, restricts abortion in such a way as to require a radical reversal of a century of "settled law" to thwart this new law. This past year has seen its share of bad news, but perhaps 2021 will be remembered best for being the beginning of the end of abortion — an end to an era of genocide of the innocent.

On May 19, 2021, Texas enacted Senate Bill 8, which took effect on September 1. S.B. 8 is like many "heartbeat" bills that have been passed in a dozen states around the nation by making a voluntary abortion illegal after a heartbeat can be detected. However, it is unique in its enforcement: Instead of implementation by criminal or administrative penalties, the new Texas law is exclusively enforced by a private right of action. Here is how it works:

- If anyone is involved in an abortion after about six weeks post conception, even if they were just paying for the abortion, all involved can be sued by any private citizen.
- Texas has set statutory damages in the amount of $10,000 to be recovered by any plaintiff.
- All persons involved in the abortion are further subject to an injunction for any future attempts to perform an illegal abortion.

Pursuant to existing Supreme Court case law in *Roe v. Wade* and *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*, courts have declared "pre-viability" bans on abortion (bans prior to about 26 weeks gestation) to be unconstitutional. However, the U.S. Supreme Court has allowed the Texas Heartbeat Act to go into effect because, rather than relying on the government to enforce the law, S.B. 8 relies on private citizens to bring civil lawsuits against those who perform an abortion procedure or aid or abet one.

Robert M. Owens, J.D. is a Regional Field Director for The John Birch Society and host of the JBS program Constitution Corner. *Prior to joining the JBS staff, he spent 20 years as a trial lawyer and 10 years as a member of the JBS National Council.*

In all other pro-life measures passed post *Roe*, enforcement would be performed by the state either as a criminal measure or in an administrative process by revoking a medical license, etc. It is the private right of action as the exclusive enforcement mechanism that is novel in this instance. All government agents are prohibited from any form of involvement in the enforcement of the law. Because enforcement does not take the form of "state action," it technically does not run afoul of past Supreme Court decisions.

That is not to say that there has been no legal opposition to the new law. In the case of *Whole Woman's Health v. Jackson*, an abortion mill in Austin, Texas, sued Austin Reeve Jackson — a judge who had been endorsed by pro-life groups — to prevent him from presiding over any case that might be brought under the Texas law. The abortion mill also sued a county clerk to prevent her from accepting any filings of any such lawsuit, Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton, and a pro-life activist named Mark Lee Dickson to prevent him from being a plaintiff in any such case.

The U.S. Supreme Court reviewed S.B. 8 in a preliminary decision on an application for injunctive relief. Injunctive relief is a legal mechanism that allows a court to issue an emergency order preventing someone or something from doing a specific act. While normally cases take years to reach the Supreme Court, limited preliminary issues such as a petition for an injunction are much more fast-paced.

The abortion provider wanted the court to use the injunction process to issue an order against these individuals that would apply to all judges, all court clerks, and all citizens, prohibiting any application of the new law. As the law had not yet taken effect at the time this lawsuit was brought, Judge Jackson did not have any case before him dealing with the heartbeat law, the clerk had not been presented with any case to file, and, of course, Dickson had not filed any enforcement action.

SciePro/iStock/GettyImagesPlus

Will he be born? The womb was once a safe haven for human life — and the Texas heartbeat approach, if adopted by states throughout the land, would help mightily in making it a safe haven once again. Though it does not end all abortions, it is a huge step in that direction and will save many lives until the day comes when all pre-born babies are protected by law.

On September 1, Justice Samuel Alito, joined by Clarence Thomas, Brett Kavanaugh, Amy Coney Barrett, and Neil Gorsuch, rendered an opinion that concluded:

> Federal courts enjoy the power to enjoin individuals tasked with enforcing laws, not the laws themselves. And it is unclear whether the named defendants in this lawsuit can or will seek to enforce the Texas law against the applicants in a manner that might permit our intervention.

While this language may seem convoluted to most Americans, the opinion nevertheless denied the abortionists' petition and, in the process, saved countless thousands of innocent lives.

Following the Supreme Court decision, the Texas pro-life law has had additional legal challenges involving various pro-abortion activists and organizations filing new lawsuits in sufficient numbers to get a judge they knew to be on their side. Once a case is filed, plaintiffs get a randomly assigned judge. If they know the judge they want, they can simply file multiple cases until a judge they want gets assigned. Once the right judge is assigned, the other suits can be dismissed and the litigation can go forward with an expectation of a favorable outcome.

In this instance, the judge that the plaintiffs wanted was a far-left, openly homosexual Obama appointee named Robert Pitman. Judge Pitman's disdain for the pro-life community was open and obvious, and he wasted no time in ruling that S.B. 8 was unconstitutional. Thus, in this rather odd turn of events, after the Supreme Court temporarily upheld the law on September 1, a district court (the lowest court in the federal system) ignored the Supreme Court and struck down the law on October 6. Judge Pitman's order lasted for about 48 hours before it was overturned by the Federal Court of Appeals. The appeals court is superior to a district court, but inferior to the Supreme Court.

On October 22, the U.S. Supreme Court decided to grant the Texas law a full review and briefing, and an oral argument was heard on November 1. The questioning was not particularly revealing as to how the key "swing vote" jus-

tices would rule, but some questions did highlight the unusual nature of this law. For example, while the pro-abortion lawyers were asking the court to issue an injunction against "the law itself," it was mentioned that injunctions can only be issued against officials. A decision from the Supreme Court can be expected by June of 2022, if not sooner. While that decision is pending, abortions in instances where a heartbeat can be detected are halted in Texas.*

If a federal court lacks subject-matter jurisdiction to consider a constitutional challenge to a statute, then it does not matter whether the disputed statute is unconstitutional, and it does not matter how unconstitutional the statute may seem to a litigant or a judge.

"Jurisdiction" Is Key

At the heart of the legal argument in support of the Texas pro-life law is the issue of jurisdiction. If a federal court lacks subject-matter jurisdiction to consider a constitutional challenge to a statute, then it does not matter whether the disputed statute is unconstitutional, and it does not matter how unconstitutional the statute may seem to a litigant or a judge.

Further, the 11th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution forbids courts to assert jurisdiction over claims brought against non-consenting state officers sued in their official capacity, unless the claim fits within a specific exception to sovereign immunity. But the exception does not apply to prevent a state's judicial officers from adjudicating and deciding cases brought before them.

A good way to understand this jurisdictional argument starts with understanding exactly how a court "strikes down" a law. The best description of this process was provided by the aforementioned John F. Mitchell, the brilliant lawyer who came up with the concept behind S.B. 8 and published his idea in a 2018 article in the *Virginia Law Review*.

AP Images

Hearing the case: In this artist's depiction, on November 1 the U.S. Supreme Court justices listen to Whole Woman's Health petitioner Marc Hearron argue for blocking the Texas Heartbeat Act. In September, the Supreme Court allowed the law to go into effect.

Mitchell stated:

> The power of judicial review is all too often regarded as something akin to an executive veto. When a court declares a statute unconstitutional or enjoins its enforcement, the disapproved law is described as having been "struck down" or rendered "void" — as if the judiciary holds a veto-like power to cancel or revoke a duly enacted statute. And the political branches carry on as though the court's decision has erased the statute from the law books. But the federal judiciary has no authority to alter or annul a statute.

Mitchell further explained,

> When judges or elected officials mistakenly assume that a court decision has canceled or revoked a duly enacted statute, they commit the "writ-of-erasure fallacy" — the fallacy that equates judicial review with a veto-like power to "strike down" legislation or delay its effective start date.
>
> The power of judicial review is more limited: It allows a court to decline to enforce a statute, and to enjoin the executive from enforcing that statute. But the judicially disapproved statute continues to exist as a law until it is repealed by the legislature that enacted it, even as it goes unenforced by the judiciary or the executive. And it is always possible that a future court might overrule the decision that declared the statute unconstitutional, thereby

*Both audio of the oral argument and a transcript of the proceeding are available at https://ballotpedia.org/Whole_Woman%27s_Health_v._Jackson

> liberating the executive to resume enforcing the statute against anyone who has violated it. Judicial review is not a power to suspend or "strike down" legislation; it is a judicially imposed non-enforcement policy that lasts only as long as the courts adhere to the constitutional objections that persuaded them to thwart the statute's enforcement.

Over the course of 70 pages of legal analysis, Mitchell went on to explain the limitations of judicial review in the context of the case of *Marbury v. Madison* and provide fascinating insight into the use of federal court procedure and past court decisions to insulate the pro-life measure. While this legal maneuver has been first used in the context of abortion law, it is not exclusive to that purpose.

Practical Implementation of the Idea

What would become S.B. 8 began as a local ordinance to prevent an out-of-state abortion mill from opening a clinic in a small community in Texas, led by grassroots activist Mark Lee Dickson. Dickson understood that the ordinance could lead to significant legal costs to this municipality, so the unique and as-yet-untested concepts of attorney Mitchell seemed to have promise.

Together, Dickson and Mitchell began a revolution in abortion law in Texas. Resolutions calling for "Sanctuary Cities for the Unborn" passed in 37 municipalities. The notoriety and success of these municipal measures created pressure on politicians at the state level, which then led to Texas passing what is known today as the Texas Heartbeat Act.

The implementation of this law should be examined carefully, as it can be applied to several other pro-liberty concepts. In his seminal work *The Art of War*, Chinese philosopher Sun Tzu promotes the concept that "success begets success." As applied above, Dickson started with a good idea. He then got it passed at a very local level, where a small group of people could expect to have success. He then built on that success to grow his team and pass the measure in municipalities all over the state. As the movement grew, he was able to get traction at the State House level.

Grassroots patriots do well to consider this methodology. For example, bills that prevent government overreach on COVID issues, bills that nullify federal firearms laws, bills that prohibit "transgender" men from participating in women's sports, or legislation that prohibits the teaching of Critical Race Theory in public schools could start at a local level and build toward action in the state legislature. All it takes is a small group of people with vision and drive.

The year 2022 could be the year patriots take their country back. There is a lot of hard work to do. In our view, a version of S.B. 8 needs to be passed in as many states as possible.

AP Images

Step by step: In January 2021, an Odessa City Council work session listened to Sanctuary Cities for the Unborn's Mark Dickson advocate for an ordinance to end abortion in Odessa, Texas. Dickson's one-community-at-a-time approach paved the way for the Texas Heartbeat Act, a gigantic step in the movement to end abortion, but not the final one.

Chief Justice Roberts Exposed

When Chief Justice John Roberts upheld ObamaCare, he did so claiming that the will of the legislature should not be easily overturned. Yet in his dissent on the *Whole Woman's Health* case, he was ready and eager to overturn the will of the Texas legislature.

Pro-Second Amendment justices have had to turn away new opportunities to expand on the precedent set in *D.C. v. Heller*, the landmark gun case that established the Second Amendment as conferring an individual right to possess and carry a firearm, because Roberts has let it be known that he would side with the liberals who want to overturn that case. With regard to the Texas S.B. 8, he sided with the Left on the basis that *Roe v. Wade* was "settled law" and should not be overruled.

Chief Justice Roberts is no friend of the Constitution. His judicial logic bends to the whims of leftist agitation. His appointment is yet another black mark on the failed presidency of George W. Bush, the same president who lied to bring the

house.texas.gov

It's the law! Governor Greg Abbott signs the Texas Heartbeat Act, surrounded by pro-life supporters.

United States into a war in Iraq and ushered in a police-state mentality with the passage of the PATRIOT Act.

The Democrats never fail in their ability to appoint far-left radical judicial activists. Considering the Supreme Court appointments of Presidents Johnson (Fortas, Marshall), Clinton (Ginsburg, Breyer), and Obama (Sotomayor, Kagen), one can see a reliable list of radical socialists with little regard for the original intent of the U.S. Constitution.

Establishment Republicans, on the other hand, have been far less reliable in appointing conservative justices to the bench. The author of the *Roe v. Wade* opinion, Harry Blackmun, was an appointee of Richard Nixon. Chief Justice Earl Warren, perhaps the most destructive radical leftist Supreme Court justice in the history of our Republic, was an appointee of Republican Dwight D. Eisenhower.

At each presidential election, pro-life activists are told that they must hold their noses and vote for the Republican nominee, as promises are made that said nominee would be sure to appoint a pro-life Supreme Court justice, but it rarely happens.

What the Pro-life Movement Should Do Next

The ability to end abortion in America is perhaps closer to reality today than at any point since 1973. In that time frame, more than 63 million unborn children have been put to death. That river of blood can now come to an end on a state-by-state basis. Will there be holdouts in leftist states? Of course. But eventually the wickedness of abortion, like the wickedness of slavery, will be so evident that abolition will be assured.

The year 2022 could be the year patriots take their country back. There is a lot of hard work to do. In our view, a version of S.B. 8 needs to be passed in as many states as possible. The lives of innocent children will be saved the moment those laws are passed. But that said, keep in mind that the few and defined powers delegated to the national government by the Constitution do not include abortion, and *Roe v. Wade* is unconstitutional — *not* the law of the land. The approach described in this article is being recommended because it can be a game-changer in bringing the abortion holocaust to an end. States possess the power to — and should — end unconstitutional overreach by the federal government at their state borders via nullification, declaring the abuses null and void. Enacting state laws throughout the land modeled after the Texas heartbeat law would end most abortions in America — but not all. Thus, enacting such laws should not be viewed as the end goal, but as an effective way to save hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of lives while pro-life activists continue to work to protect the right to life from conception of all unborn babies.

Hopefully, as the understanding about our form of government and the division of powers grows, the use of nullification by the states will also grow and will be applied to nullify *Roe v. Wade*. But in the meantime, adopting a form of the Texas heartbeat bill in various states will save many lives.

Patriotic Americans need to take responsibility for reclaiming their freedom on medical issues, on gun rights, and on election integrity. They need to show the current leadership in Congress the door in the mid-term elections. All of these things can be accomplished, but those on the side of liberty and limited government are going to need to work as a team. For our part, that team is called The John Birch Society (the parent company of this magazine). Please go to JBS.org to learn what can be done and how you can help. ■

EXTRA COPIES AVAILABLE

◀ Additional copies of this issue of The New American are available at quantity-discount prices. To place your order, visit www.shopjbs.org or see the card between pages 34-35.

THE ONYX COLLECTION

Elegance for your bath

Showers

Bases • Walls • Accessories & Shower Doors

Lavatories

Standard & Custom

Accessories

Caddies & Trim

Yes! Guaranteed Forever

Proudly Made in Kansas, USA

"Less government, More individual responsibility, And with God's help, A better world"

105 Broadway St. Belvue, KS 66407 • (phone) 800-669-9867 (fax) 800-393-6699
www.onyxcollection.com

RITTENHOUSE CASE
THE LIES AND THE TRUTH

The media's false narrative beguiled many into viewing Rittenhouse as a murderer. But in court, it was the truth that mattered.

AP Images

The verdict: Kyle Rittenhouse was found not guilty of murder after killing two men, wounding a third, and shooting at another during last year's riots in Kenosha, Wisconsin.

by R. Cort Kirkwood

A sobbing Kyle Rittenhouse collapsed after a jury acquitted him on all counts related to his shooting and killing two men, and wounding a third, in Kenosha, Wisconsin, during the Jacob Blake riots last year. But he wasn't the only American relieved, or perhaps even surprised, given that the jury deliberated almost four full days. And though the jury's message was clear — communist mobs will not be permitted to destroy cities and brutalize people who stand against them — it didn't just spare Rittenhouse from life in prison.

It stopped a prosecutor's attempt, at the unspoken behest of the Democratic Party, the leftist mainstream media, and their Antifa-Black Lives Matter storm troopers, to railroad an innocent kid who defended himself against four hardened criminals. Though video clearly showed Rittenhouse acting in self-defense, prosecutors forged ahead. They would make an example of Rittenhouse. Like Derek Chauvin and George Zimmerman, Rittenhouse was the victim of a racially and politically motivated prosecution, a morality play in which the Great White Defendant is exposed as a villain created in the casting department of *Mississippi Burning*.

The trial showed that the criminal-justice system can still render a fair verdict with an impartial and courageous judge and jury. But then again, it also showed that no one is safe from ideologically motivated prosecutors.

R. Cort Kirkwood is a longtime contributor to The New American. *He was a newspaperman for more than 25 years.*

The Lies

Within hours of the shootings on August 25, 2020, the leftist mainstream media and its army of Twitter Orcs set the narrative with outright lies about Rittenhouse and what he did — and didn't do. That mendacious narrative is clearly what drove prosecutors to charge him, again, despite video that clearly depicted four separate attacks on Rittenhouse in a matter of minutes.

This is what video clearly and unequivocally proved:

• Joseph Rosenbaum, a deranged sociopath and child rapist, ran hither and yon, spitting threats of murder and violence. "Shoot me, n***a, shoot me n***a," he shouted. Rosenbaum, a witness testified, also said he would "kill [the] "motherf***ing n***ers" who were defending their businesses and "cut [their] hearts out." Another witness testified that he pushed a flaming dumpster toward occupied police cars. He chased and cornered Rittenhouse, then tried to grab his AR-15, which the then-17-year-old carried for protection. Rittenhouse killed the man affectionately known among leftists as JoJo.

• As Rittenhouse went to find police, the communist mob attacked. An unidentified street thug hit him in the head with a rock. When the mob finally had Rittenhouse where it wanted him — on the ground — an unidentified career criminal known only as Jump Kick Man kicked Rittenhouse in the face. Rittenhouse fired and missed. Jump Kick Man wisely retreated.

• Then another felon entered the melee. Convicted strangler and domestic abuser Anthony Huber hit Rittenhouse over the head with a skateboard. Rittenhouse shot and killed him.

• Then the fourth criminal, Gaige Grosskreutz, attacked. Grosskreutz pointed an illegally carried .40-caliber Glock

The trial showed that the criminal-justice system can still render a fair verdict with an impartial and courageous judge and jury. But then again, it also showed that no one is safe from ideologically motivated prosecutors.

AP Images

Not helping the prosecution: Gaige Grosskreutz confessed during the trial of Kyle Rittenhouse that he illegally carried the Glock .40-caliber semi-automatic pistol he pointed at Rittenhouse. Rittenhouse didn't shoot, Grosskreutz confessed, until he pointed the Glock at Rittenhouse.

semi-automatic pistol at Rittenhouse, who fired again. That bullet blew apart Grosskreutz's right biceps.

Rittenhouse did nothing to provoke Rosenbaum. Rittenhouse threatened no one with his rifle as he tried to run to turn himself in to police. But the raging mob of rioting goons chased him down. They wanted to "cranium" Rittenhouse, as one thug shouted.

The video was unimpeachable. Even the criminal complaint's description of the shootings showed that Rittenhouse shot the men in self-defense. But that wasn't enough for leftists, particularly elected officials who should have known better. U.S. Representative Ayanna Pressley, a leftist from Massachusetts, immediately tweeted what became representative of the leftist media's narrative.

"A 17 year old white supremacist domestic terrorist drove across state lines, armed with an AR 15," she tweeted. "He shot and killed 2 people who had assembled to affirm the value, dignity, and worth of Black lives."

That claim — that he took the rifle across state lines — is utterly false, but that was just one falsehood. In any case, leftists behaved like a torch-bearing mob chasing the monster in an old Frankenstein movie. As Grabien Media founder Tom Elliott asked in a tweet that contained a mash-up of material from MSNBC and The Young Turks, "why do reporting when we already know Rittenhouse is a terrorist?" Elliott's collection made it clear that they knew absolutely nothing about Rittenhouse or what happened that night.

• **Ana Kasparian, The Young Turks:** "He murdered 2 people, by the way."

• **Cenk Uyger, The Young Turks:** "Rittenhouse, a guy who's deeply racist, went with weapons to a Black Lives Matter protest looking to get in trouble. He did, he murdered a couple of people."

"Rittenhouse [is] the 17-year-old that went with a weapon into the middle of a protest, and then provoked people, and then shot and killed them."

• **Jason Johnson, MSNBC:** "Rittenhouse is basically what you would have had in a school shooter. He's a 17-year-old kid, he shouldn't have had a gun. He crossed state lines to supposedly protect property. No, he was going out to shoot people."

"Kyle Rittenhouse is the enemy."

• **Joe Scarborough, MSNBC:** "Rittenhouse, the 17-year-old kid, [was] just running around shooting and killing protesters."

"[Rittenhouse is] a 17-year-old boy, who drove across state lines with an AR-15, and started shooting people up, including a guy with a skateboard."

"A boy from out of state, drives up to the state with an AR-15 around his neck, shoots and kills a couple of people, shooting wildly, running around acting like a rent-a-cop."

"What a dark dystopian scene where a 17-year-old boy is carrying around a rifle, running around and gunning down protesters."

• **John Heileman, MSNBC:** "A 17-year-old vigilante, arguably a domestic terrorist, picked up a rifle, drove to a different state to shoot people."

"A white, Trump-supporting, MAGA-loving, Blue Lives Matter social media partisan, 17-years-old, picks up a gun, drives from one state to another with the intent to shoot people."

MSNBC's Joy-Ann Reid and Lawrence O'Donnell, Antifa-BLM activists and apologists who pass as journalists, repeatedly called him a "vigilante."

The ex-officio leader of the lynch mob, by the way, was none other than President Joe Biden, who falsely called Rittenhouse a "white supremacist."

Coverage just before and during the trial was no better. And that was long after leftists had the chance to see the video. *The Atlantic* labeled him an "American Vigilante," and while that offering from the snooty elites at least got the story a little right, it never mentioned the records of the

hardened criminals who attacked, which were available shortly after the shooting.

Also ignoring those criminal records, The Intercept offered this headline over a story full of falsehoods and misleading claims: "Rittenhouse Jury Has to Decide If the Men Who Tried to Stop Him Were Heroes or Villains."

That formulation suggested, as prosecutors did in closing arguments, that Rittenhouse was an "active shooter" whom Huber, Grosskreutz, and Jump Kick Man were "trying to disarm." "When you think about the defendant's behavior in this case," prosecutor Thomas Binger had claimed, "contrast it with Anthony Huber, a man who was there because he knew Jacob Blake, who carried his skateboard everywhere, and who rushed towards danger to save other people's lives."

Rosenbaum, The Intercept's Robert MacKay wrote, "chased the heavily armed teen for reasons that remain unclear," and Huber was "one of three protesters who tried to disarm the gunman as he fled the scene."

In fact, Rosenbaum's reasons were crystal clear: He chased Rittenhouse to kill him, as he had warned. Why Huber thought he could "disarm" a "heavily-armed" "gunman," we cannot know, but we do know he tried to kill Rittenhouse with a skateboard. And as prosecution witness Grosskreutz admitted at trial, Rittenhouse did not shoot him until he, Grosskreutz, aimed his illegally carried Glock at Rittenhouse. Amusingly, Grosskreutz confessed that his $10 million lawsuit against the city doesn't mention his firearm.

Hoping to guarantee a conviction, hate-Rittenhouse MSNBC sent a producer to track the jury bus. The network would then identify jurors and intimidate them. Judge Bruce Schroeder kicked MSNBC out of the courtroom for the remainder of the trial. Violent hate-Rittenhouse "protesters" showed up outside the courthouse, just feet away from where jurors deliberated.

On Twitter, hateful leftists threatened violence and mayhem if jurors acquitted Rittenhouse. "If we don't burn the judge of the Rittenhouse trial at the stake after this farce is over I will riot," one said. "I want it on pay per view, I want it at the MGM and Vegas, I want there to be beer and wings deals at every bar when it happens. F**k this place." Another threatened to "burn the Rittenhouse judge at the stake."

All that, plus the nearly four full days of deliberations, suggested the jury might convict. Remarkably, they stood up to the mob.

Post-verdict Lies

After the trial, the counterfactual hate-Rittenhouse propaganda campaign continued. The Intercept falsely claimed that Rittenhouse went to Kenosha to "hunt down anti-racist protesters with an assault rifle."

"Anthony Huber and Joseph Rosenbaum are victims," New York Mayor Bill de Blasio tweeted:

> They should be alive today.
>
> The only reason they're not is because a violent, dangerous man chose to take a gun across state lines and start shooting people.
>
> To call this a miscarriage of justice is an understatement.

Again, false. Rittenhouse was not "a violent, dangerous man" who "chose to take a gun across state lines and start shooting people."

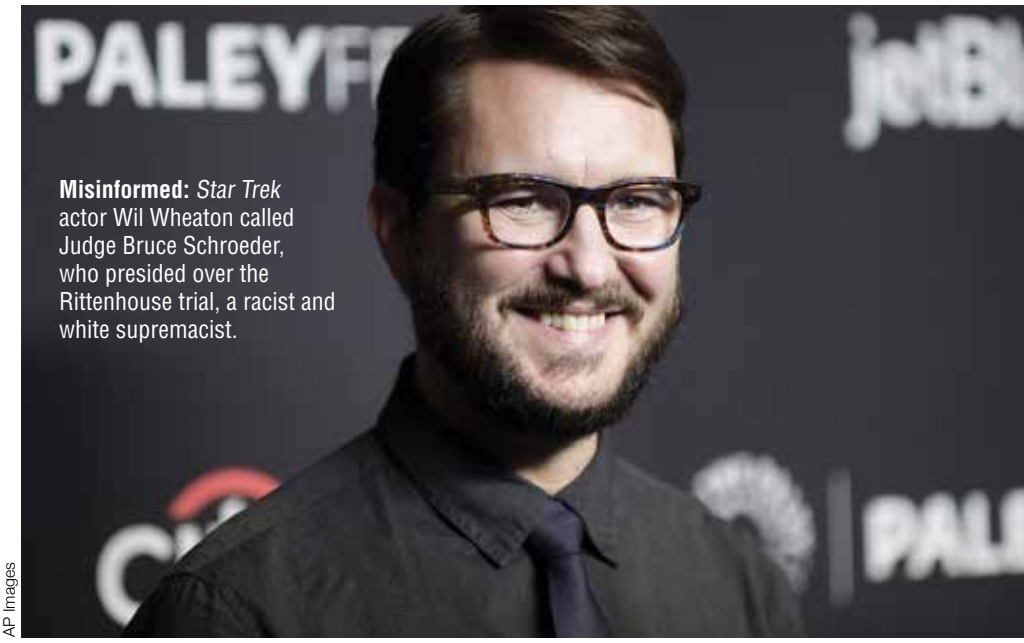
Representative Jerry Nadler (D-N.Y.) peddled a nearly identical falsehood:

> This heartbreaking verdict is a miscarriage of justice and sets a dangerous precedent which justifies federal review by DOJ. Justice cannot tolerate armed persons crossing state lines looking for trouble while people engage in First Amendment-protected protest."

Rittenhouse wasn't "looking for trouble," and what occurred in Kenosha wasn't a protest. It was a full-blown riot that left businesses in flames and property destroyed. State and local officials did nothing to stop it. Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers encouraged it.

But Rittenhouse "left a trail of bodies on the ground, and two of the people he shot were acting on the belief that Rittenhouse himself was an active shooter," phony conservative David French wrote for *The Atlantic*. "He had, after all, just killed a man."

Again, false. Rittenhouse did not leave a "trail of bodies on the ground" that would suggest that Rittenhouse did what Scarborough falsely accused him of doing: "shooting wildly" and "running around and gunning down protesters." Rittenhouse was not an "active shooter," and no one could have thought that. "Active shooters" don't stop shooting until their ammo runs out, they commit suicide, or police stop them. Nor do they shout, as Rittenhouse did, that they're trying to find police. They don't try to turn themselves in, as Rittenhouse did.



Misinformed: *Star Trek* actor Wil Wheaton called Judge Bruce Schroeder, who presided over the Rittenhouse trial, a racist and white supremacist.

AP Images

AP Images

Heroes of the Left: Hate-Rittenhouse protesters lionized the two men he shot and killed, boy rapist Joseph Rosenbaum and convicted strangler Anthony Huber.

In a Facebook post, *Star Trek* thespian Wil Wheaton recycled the lie that Rittenhouse killed two blacks and preposterously claimed that "hunting non-white humans is now a-ok." And like so many others, he claimed that Judge Schroeder, a Democrat who made sure Rittenhouse received a fair trial, had a "racist little white nationalist heart."

Maryland's chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union called the verdict "dangerous, disgusting, unacceptable white supremacy." MSNBC's Reid compared Rittenhouse to a slave trader, and Tiffany Cross called Rittenhouse a "murderous little white supremacist."

Besides all that, the media generally omitted a salient fact in its coverage: The "mostly peaceful protests" that ended in flaming, burned-out businesses were premised on another big leftist lie: that the shooting of Jacob Blake was yet another wanton act of "anti-black violence." In fact, police arrived at the scene of a domestic disturbance in which Blake, wanted on a warrant for sex assault, was the aggressor. Blake resisted arrest, brandished a knife, and tried to get into an SUV before Officer Rusten Sheskey fired in self-defense. Kenosha's district attorney ruled the shooting justified, citing, in part, a former police chief who had worked for the Obama administration. As well, the administration ruled out federal charges against the officers.

Not that any of that mattered to the Antifa-BLM communists looking for a reason to riot.

The Meaning of the Verdict

More than a little frightening is another fact. Top Democrats and media leftists had to know the truth. Granted, some lay leftists knew only what the media told them; thus, they nodded in bovine agreement with the fake news the media published and broadcast — that Rittenhouse was a racist aggressor who provoked the attacks — and truly were shocked that Rittenhouse was acquitted.

Not so for those who watched the trial or paid attention to details. Anyone who saw the video and listened to the testimony at trial knew Rittenhouse did not commit either intentional or reckless homicide. Nor was he recklessly shooting at people. Again, prosecutors knew, too, but charged forward to send a message on behalf of the Deep State, Democratic Party, and their street enforcers: Americans are not allowed to protect their property from rioting communist mobs, or even protect themselves from communist mobs trying to kill them. The authorities didn't stop the riots. And no one else can, either.

But they also had a follow-up message in mind — the same one prosecutors sent in the trials of Chauvin and Zimmerman. Because whites are, as Critical Race Theory tells us, inherently racist and privileged, white cops who subdue black felons with force are acting with racial malice, and white civilians who defend themselves against either black assailants or their supporters are likewise motivated by the same animus, and even worse have a license to kill because of "white privilege" and self-defense laws.

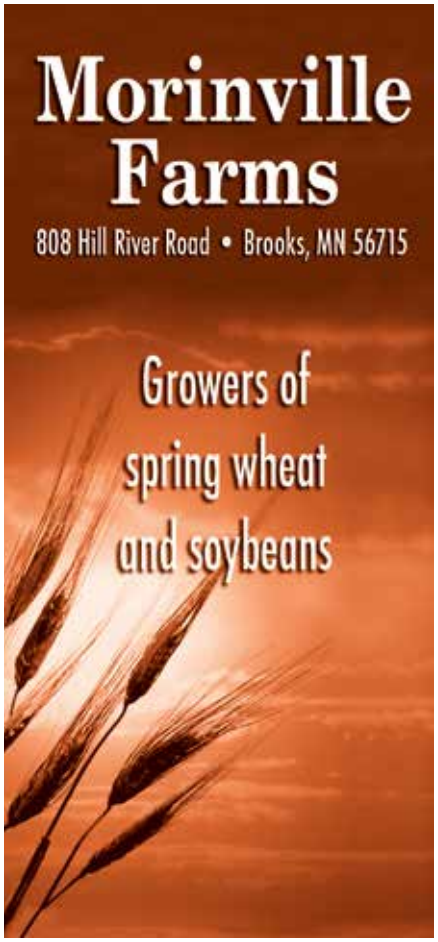
Thus, the lies. The hate-Rittenhouse lynch mob had to say that he "crossed state lines to shoot people," that he was in a community "where he did not belong," that he was an "armed vigilante" and "heavily-armed gunman," and worse, of course, that he was a "racist," "domestic terrorist," and "murderous little white supremacist." The lynch mob had to ignore the criminal records of Rittenhouse's assailants, and had to insist they were "BLM protesters." Otherwise, prosecuting him wouldn't have been justified. But if Rittenhouse is a "white supremacist," if his "victims" were just "protesters" upset about the Blake shooting and trying to stop an "active shooter," then he didn't have the right to defend himself. The only right he had was the right to remain silent and let communist goons kill him. That was the prosecutors' argument.

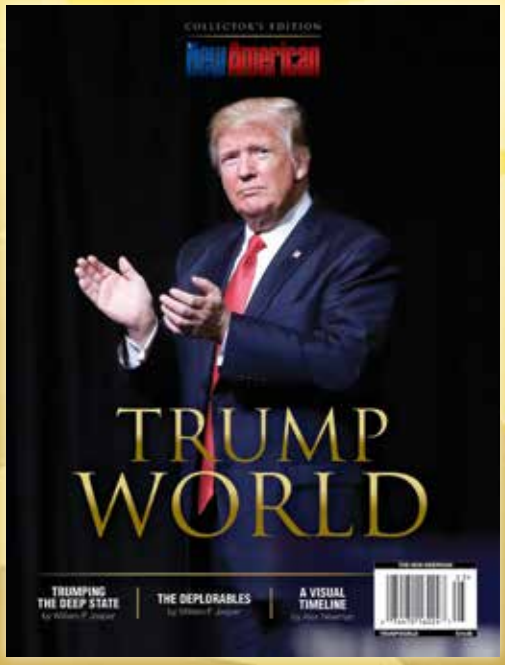
Yet even as the Democrats and the Deep State and their leftist media information ministry pounded home the message that Rittenhouse was a foaming-at-the-mouth white supremacist, just waiting for an excuse to murder blacks or their white BLM supporters, jurors were unmoved. They sent a message back: We will not permit communist mobs to burn down cities. We will not permit mobs to attack those trying to protect life, limb, and property. We will not permit "protesters" to attempt murder, then blame the victim.

The struggle against politicized justice isn't over. The 12 who acquitted Rittenhouse are just one jury among many, and prosecutors in this case charged the boy despite clear evidence that he defended himself. They charged him because he was on the wrong side of a communist mob. Had Rittenhouse been an Antifa-BLM protester, if he had shot three "white supremacists" who stopped him from burning down a business, he might never have seen the inside of a courtroom. ■

See also pages 41 and 44.

Give the Gift
they'll open again & again
A Subscription To
The New American
The New American
For faster service, call (800) 727-TRUE or
visit https://thenewamerican.com/subscribe/


Morinville
Farms
808 Hill River Road • Brooks, MN 56715
Growers of
spring wheat
and soybeans



GET YOURS TODAY!

COLLECTOR'S
EDITION

This special Collector's Edition of *The New American* commemorates the historical importance of the Trumpworld movement in placing Donald Trump into the Oval Office and the implications of its continuing influence on American life for the foreseeable future.

$14.99 | Bulk pricing available

THE PERFECT GIFT FOR ANY FREEDOM-LOVING AMERICAN!

HOVER YOUR PHONE CAMERA OVER QR CODE FOR INSTANT ACCESS!

UN COP26

Boosting China, Advancing Globalist Lockdown

Does it make sense to decimate the U.S. economy while boosting China? It only does when it's recognized that the goal of the global green regime is to shackle the planet, not save it.

AP Images

Build Back Better: Joe Biden is one of many "world leaders" who attended the UN climate summit in Glasgow to betray their nations and shackle humanity.

by Alex Newman

The big news out of the latest United Nations climate summit is that the Biden administration agreed to further decimate the U.S. economy and force America to become even more dependent on Communist Chinese "green" industries. This will boost Beijing's power and global CO_2 emissions as more Western industry moves to China, which emits more CO_2 than the United States, India, and the European Union combined.

Alex Newman is senior editor of The New American, *author of the book* Deep State: The Invisible Government Behind the Scenes, *and co-author (with the late Sam Blumenfeld) of* Crimes of the Educators.

Not surprisingly, shortly after the summit concluded, the *New York Times* revealed that Hunter Biden, the president's son, played a key role in handing Beijing one of the world's biggest cobalt mines. Cobalt is a key mineral involved in "green" schemes. It was not immediately clear how much the "Big Guy" — Joe Biden — might have received from the deal.

It was a perfect metaphor for the entire conference: Western nations must hand over trillions of dollars, slash their prosperity, give up more freedom, and redistribute their wealth to Third World kleptocrats and global elites. In exchange, those Third World kleptocrats promise to keep their people poor forever, as China pledged to keep building more coal-fired power plants.

Of course, globalist totalitarians, kleptocrats, and "world leaders" who gathered to supposedly save the planet from the gas of life (CO_2) did not get everything they wanted at the "climate change" summit held in Glasgow, Scotland, from October 31 to November 13. But they certainly made great progress toward their goal of "net zero," which is cover for global centralization of economic and political power.

From drastically upping the proposed wealth-redistribution numbers to pledging a rapid "phase down" of essential hydrocarbon energy dubbed "fossil fuels" in the agreement, the UN's 26th Conference of the Parties (COP26) was a bonanza for global elites and their minions. As always, the "climate crisis" turned out to be a major cash cow.

In the early days of the summit, virtually every speaker and political bigwig declared that the summit was the last chance to save the planet from destruction. Still, by the end, everyone involved agreed that the planet was not quite saved yet and that more expensive, CO_2-spewing meetings would be required for years to come, preferably in exotic locations with good airports so the private jets can find parking.

After days of "blah blah blah," as teen climate activist Greta Thunberg put it, it is easy to see why critics ridiculed the confab as a "doomsday cult." In fact, too many speakers, diplomats, and climate activists to count literally shrieked about the impending climate doom that was certainly coming upon Mother Earth because of the emissions sins of evil polluting human beings.

U.K. Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who once ridiculed the climate circus for peddling "primitive fear" that was "without foundation," was among the many

doomsday prophets at COP26. "It's one minute to midnight on that doomsday clock and we need to act now," he said, echoing similar pronouncements made at every UN "climate" summit for decades.

The head of the UN, longtime global socialist leader António Guterres, sounded similarly apocalyptic in his pronouncements about the demands of the climate gods. Continuing to use hydrocarbon energy is tantamount to "digging our own graves," he declared. "We face a stark choice: either we stop it — or it stops us."

It was the first UN "climate" summit since COVID and world governments' unprecedented assault on liberty rocked the world in early 2020. It was also the first summit in years where a compliant U.S. president was willing to play along with — and fund — the increasingly unhinged process. And thus, it was highly significant for several reasons.

To begin with, ruling elites from around the world made enough "pledges" to keep global warming below 2°C. Of course, the models making these forecasts of temperature change based on CO_2 output are an international laughingstock, with a track record of always being wrong. But based on those models, the planet should be safe if governments follow through.

"Of course it is all just political promises. Many are economically impossible, some physically so," explained Dr. David Wojick, Ph.D. in an analysis for the free-market environmentalist group CFACT. "At this point that is not the point. The alarmist movement has the serious problem of apparent success. How they handle it will be fun to watch."

As always, money was a key issue. Kleptocratic rulers from Africa initially demanded that a staggering $1.3 trillion per year be funneled into their bank accounts, supposedly to compensate them for CO_2 emitted by more-advanced nations. But even Western kleptocrats eager to fleece their subjects to save Mother Earth were not willing to go that far — at least not yet.

Without consulting Congress, which must approve all expenditures, the Biden administration pledged to hand over nearly $12 billion annually for the global slush fund known as the "Green Climate Fund." This fund is critical to the whole scam because it is what keeps Third World kleptocrats playing the game and doing as they are told.

During his term, Obama agreed to help set up the fund, and even used legal trickery to bypass federal laws prohibiting U.S. taxpayer funding of international organizations that included the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. Tens of billions of dollars are already being transferred annually from poor and middle-class taxpayers in wealthier nations to elites in poor nations using the "fund."

On the sidelines of the event, the Biden administration and the mass-murdering dictatorship enslaving Communist China announced that they would join forces for "enhanced climate actions." Ironically, despite pledging to "raise ambition" and pursue more "clean energy," the regime in Beijing is building coal-fired power plants faster than the U.S. government can shut down those operating in the United States.

"There is more agreement between China and US than divergence," Beijing's top "climate" diplomat Xie Zhenhua told reporters at the summit. Biden's "climate" envoy John Kerry, who flew to Iceland to pick up his Arctic Circle award for climate leadership in a private jet, echoed those remarks, saying "on climate, co-operation is the only way to get this job done."

Ironically, Communist China emits more CO_2 than the United States, the European Union, and India — combined. But under the UN agreements based around the illegitimate Paris deal signed by Obama but never ratified by the U.S. Senate, Beijing vowed to continue increasing its emissions for at least a decade, if not more.

All of this will cause far more CO_2 to be released into the atmosphere. As Biden and EU leaders shut down U.S. industry, more of that production and manufacturing (and thus energy consumption) will take place in China, where CO_2 emissions per unit of output are drastically higher. In other words, if the climate movement believed in the hypothesis underpinning the summit, this would be the worst possible outcome.

Within weeks of the UN summit ending, the *New York Times* reported that "Hunter Biden, the president's son, was a founding board member of a firm that helped China secure one of the world's largest cobalt deposits." Cobalt is a key input for various unreliable and expensive "clean energy" technologies, including batteries, that the Biden administration is working to foist on Americans as Beijing corners the market on critical minerals for the industry.

Beijing also got a key stake in the lithium market, another key mineral, as Biden handed over Afghanistan to the

AP Images

Keeping them poor: "Climate" policies imposed on Third World nations by their leaders in exchange for bribes from Western governments will perpetuate poverty.

While the world's governments and kleptocrats are making less progress than they would have liked on impoverishing the planet and shackling humanity to a global "climate" regime, they are making progress nonetheless.

RoschetzkyIstockPhoto/ iStock / Getty Images Plus

Going green: Under UN "climate" agreements, reliable and cheap hydrocarbon fuels will be phased out and replaced with costly, unreliable "green" energy.

Taliban and its allies in the regime ruling China on a silver platter. The brutal dictatorship enslaving mainland China dominates the rare-earth minerals sector, giving it a preeminent position in many of the very industries that the Biden administration is forcing Americans to become dependent on.

"Net zero" was the big buzzword this time. In other words, humanity's net CO_2 emissions must be reduced to nothing. For every bit of CO_2 released, some climate grifter such as Al Gore must be paid for "carbon credits" to ensure that a tree is planted where an African village used to be. Yes, seriously. Meanwhile, leading experts such as Dr. William Happer of Princeton have warned that the planet and the plants living on it are starving for CO_2.

Ironically, the summit's so-called carbon footprint was twice as large as the previous summit, held in Madrid two years ago. According to a preliminary report, the UN's anti-CO_2 fest was responsible for releasing more than 100,000 tons of the gas into the atmosphere.

Hundreds of private jets used by Big Business bosses such as Jeff Bezos and Big Government bosses from around the world — the very people claiming humanity must emit less of the essential gas — contributed a major portion of that total.

Despite the efforts of the far-left establishment media to cover it up, the wannabe "climate" superheroes know full well that they will be ridiculed and criticized worldwide for the obscene display of hypocrisy and gluttony. However, the reality is that there is no way to feed, transport, and keep warm large numbers of people without those pesky fossil fuels the summit was supposedly aimed at vanquishing.

"Fossil fuels supply more than three-quarters of the world's energy today because they are affordable, reliable, and abundant," explained Ayn Rand Institute Vice President Keith Lockitch, Ph.D. in a piece for New Ideal. "It's a dangerous fiction to propose, and to set as a goal for the world's nations, that we can replace fossil fuels with dilute, unreliable, unstable sources such as wind and solar."

"The relatively minor scale-up of wind and solar in recent years has already driven up energy costs and seriously impacted the stability of affected electric grids," he continued. "Indeed, just a day or two into the COP26 event, wind power in the UK reached critically low levels, resulting in the need for coal-generated power plants to come online."

"The unsurprising hypocrisy at COP26 underscores the irrationality of its goals. Since every aspect of human life depends crucially on energy, you can't even hold a conference whose aim is to destroy our ability to use reliable, stable, inexpensive energy without relying on the very energy sources under attack," he added. "What we should be condemning about COP26 is not its hypocrisy but its hysterical fearmongering rhetoric and its deadly anti-energy goals."

In a series of interviews after the COP26 summit, climate realist Marc Morano argued that the children being used by the UN and the climate-agenda peddlers were increasingly seeing through the charade and were no longer willing to play along. Indeed, Greta Thunberg described the summit as a "failure," adding that the UN confabs had become a "PR event."

While the world's governments and kleptocrats are making less progress than they would have liked on impoverishing the planet and shackling humanity to a global "climate" regime, they are making progress nonetheless. It will be up to Congress as well as state and local governments to stand in the way and interpose on behalf of their constituents. ■

The Gift of Sight

An anonymous donor made a life-changing donation to help a seven-year-old Oregon girl who lost her vision as a result of brain cancer.

Raelyn Miller-Ramirez of Portland began feeling lethargic and having issues with her balance at just six years old, so her parents took her to the doctor, Raelyn's mother, Chantel Miller, told KGW8. Initially, the doctors believed Raelyn suffered from vertigo, but a trip to the emergency room in September 2020 would change everything. It was then the Millers learned Raelyn had brain cancer.

"The tumor was blocking her spinal fluid from traveling back and forth and that was causing her balance to be off," Miller said.

What's more, the tumor was causing vision loss. "That was causing her brain to swell, which crushed her optic nerve that made her lose her vision."

And while Raelyn is, by the grace of God, cancer-free, her loss of sight is an unfortunate life-long effect.

"We have our struggle days where things are hard and she gets frustrated because she just wants to see again, but all we can do is put things in front of her to help her," Miller told KGW.

But thanks to the generosity of an anonymous donor, Raelyn was blessed with a low vision magnifying glass on November 4 to help her see some of the time. The device will make it possible to do some of the things most children take for granted, such as reading, writing, and drawing. It even scans and reads books and handwritten letters back to her.

"Her vision range is only about 6 inches from her face," Miller told KGW8. "So that's why the magnification is so incredible, because closer to her face, with the bigger letters, she can see it."

The donation came through Campaign One at a Time, an organization devoted to ensuring "no child battling a severe illness ever feels alone." A donor gifted all the funds necessary for the device even before the organization was able to launch an official campaign for Raelyn, Breitbart reported.

According to Raelyn's fundraising page, Team Cole, Raelyn is "excited to be cancer free and enjoy the rest of her best life."

Back the Blue

Seven-year-old Abrielle Mundahl of West, Texas, made it her mission to raise money for first responders in her community as a display of gratitude for all they do.

Mundahl's modest goal was to raise $100 selling water, baked goods, and painted rocks at her own fundraising event. She set aside two weeks to prepare for the event, hoping to make enough painted rocks and baked goods to help meet her goal. But by the end of the fundraiser, she had raised a whopping $1,787.

Abrielle had wanted to do charity work ever since she learned about it in school at five years old. But COVID put a wrench in those plans until recently, when Abrielle came up with the idea of hosting her own fundraiser — "Back the Blue" — which took place on October 30, WND.com reported.

The funds were donated to the City of West Police Department, West EMS, and the West Fire Department.

"I felt like I just accomplished something that I didn't know I was going to accomplish, and it was unexpected," she said proudly as she presented the checks on November 5.

According to a Facebook post by the City of West Police Department, which announced it would use the funds for community policing efforts, Mundahl surpassed her goal with the help of generous donors.

Her amazing efforts landed her a "Challenge Coin" from the City of West Police Department, a true honor in that small town.

Abrielle has caught the fundraising bug, and hopes to do more in the future, KWTX reported.

Take My Wish

Mississippi teen Abraham Olagbegi donated his "Make-a-Wish" to feed the homeless one day a month for an entire year.

Abraham was just 12 years old last year when he found out that he had a rare blood disorder and required a bone-marrow transplant. As he battled his illness, he learned he qualified as a recipient for Make-a-Wish, but instead of using it on himself, he decided he was going to use it to help others.

When Abraham told his mother, Miriam, of his decision, she was proud, but wanted to be sure he did not want to use the wish for something he really wanted, such as a PlayStation. Abraham insisted he would rather use his wish to feed the homeless.

"So, of course, we weren't going to miss an opportunity like that because we always tried to instill giving into our children," Miriam told CBS News.

On the third Thursday of every month, Make-a-Wish's Mississippi chapter coordinates with local charities and businesses to feed up to 80 homeless people in Jackson's Poindexter Park. Abraham's wish will continue until August 2022.

"We were excited," Linda Sermons of Make-a-Wish Mississippi told WLBT News 3 during the first event in September. "This is our first philanthropic wish in our 20-plus years of the chapter in the state. [It's] a huge milestone for us, but also this is the first meal that Abraham is able to serve."

"When the homeless people get the plate, some of them would come back and sing to us and thank us," Abraham told CBS News. "It just really feels good, it warms our hearts — and my parents always taught us that it's a blessing to be a blessing."

Meanwhile, Abraham's prognosis is promising after a successful transplant and an intense chemotherapy schedule. And with Abraham's health restored, he and his family intend to continue their mission of helping the homeless long after the "wish" runs out.

"We're very excited to be able to continue on this endeavor. It's just so rewarding," Miriam told CBS News. "If I was out there on the streets, homeless, I would want somebody at some point to think of me and to do something special for me, so, that's what I try to instill in my kids." ■

— Raven Clabough

The Golden Age of Christian Art and Culture From Dante to Dostoevsky

Dante's *Divine Comedy* helped to usher in the Golden Age of Christian culture and civilization that in many ways Dostoevsky defended five centuries later against the coming juggernaut of materialism, atheism, and socialism.

by Dr. Duke Pesta

Before the calendar year of 2021 expires — and the Christian holidays that mark its conclusion pass fully into history — it is instructive and thought-provoking to consider two other momentous years ending in "21" that stand out across the long, eventful annals of Christian history and civilization.

Seven-hundred years ago, in 1321, Dante Alighieri died in exile in Ravenna, Italy. Despite being Florence's most celebrated son and revered poet, civil faction and international strife meant that Dante would not see his native Florence for most of the last two decades of his life. Nevertheless, his *Divine Comedy* remains a high-water mark of Christian poetry and resulted in the first genuinely Christian epic, rivaling and in certain aspects superseding the epic masterpieces of Classical authors, including Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, and Virgil's *Aeneid*. Often cited as both the great summation of Medieval wisdom and the path-breaking precursor of Christian humanism, the *Comedy* serves as a bridge between the scholastic philosophy of the Middle Ages and Europe's new (re)encounter with classical learning and the burgeoning individualism that characterized Renaissance thought, an achievement that garnered for Dante the laurel garland as the first true poet laureate of Christian civilization.

A full five centuries later, in 1821, Fyodor Dostoevsky was born in Moscow. Like Dante, he too was banished and spent a long period in exile. Dostoevsky's banishment took place, however, during his early adulthood, before he had achieved broad and lasting fame as a novelist and essayist. In 1849, he was sentenced to death for belonging to a subversive organization, the Petrashevsky Circle, and for the crime of reading banned books and circulating them to others. At the last moment — and in dramatic fashion — Dostoevsky's death sentence was commuted, and he was ultimately sentenced to four years of hard labor in Siberia, followed by another six years of compulsory military service, also in exile. Dostoevsky's existential and brutal experiences in prison engendered in him a deep recommitment to the Christian faith, and upon obtaining freedom he moved to St. Petersburg in 1859, where he began in earnest his formal career as a novelist. Henceforth, his novels would plumb with increasing depth and insight the mysteries of the Christian faith, emphasizing redemption against a backdrop of secular Westernization and encroaching atheistic socialism that would eventually transform Russia into the world's first communist state. The art, philosophy, and Christian apologetics that underpin Dostoevsky's major novels — *Crime and Punishment* (1866), *The Idiot* (1869), *Demons* (1872), and *The Brothers Karamazov* (1881) — are among the most powerful arguments ever marshalled in support of a Christian worldview, a revival of faith that alone might check the rising tides of materialism, atheism, and socialism

The Supreme Poet: Our image of Dante is captured in this stern and imposing profile, complete with prominent Roman nose, and crown of laurel, signaling poetic excellence.

Dr. Duke Pesta is executive director of FreedomProject Academy, a classical school that offers online classes in real time for kindergarten through high school.

before they swamped under forever the grand civilization of Western Christendom. If Dante's death in 1321 marked the passing of the greatest poet of Christian imagination, then surely the birth of Dostoevsky in 1821 presaged the rise of Christianity's last major prophet, a monitory voice of Old Testament stature and vision, whose lamentation for the receding influence of the Gospels would fall on similarly deaf ears.

The years 1321 and 1821 thus loosely bookend the Golden Age of Christian art and culture: not a bad run for a religion that gave birth to such widely diverse civilizations — all under the aegis of Christ — spanning Europe from Florence to St. Petersburg, and from North Africa to Scandinavia, eventually spreading to the New World and beyond. In the arts alone, this empire of Christian thought and influence gave us Brunelleschi, Donatello, Michelangelo, and Bernini in sculpture and architecture; Giotto, Raphael, Titian, Caravaggio, and Rembrandt in painting; Bach, Handel, Mozart, Beethoven, and Haydn in Classical music; and Chaucer, Shakespeare, Donne, Bunyan, Milton, Swift, and Dickens in English literature. Prior to this Christian Golden Age — when Christendom was finally so well established that it had much less to fear from outside threats such as Islam than it did from internecine strife and denominational difference from inside — there were some 1,300 years of bronze- and silver-age Christian culture, of nascent, ascending, evolving, creating, and crusading Christian imagination, warring against infidels abroad and heretics at home, still heavily dependent upon Classical pagan and Byzantine traditions in painting, sculpture, and a host of other arts and sciences.

And from Dostoevsky's death in 1881 until now, the Golden Age of Christian culture has receded in the West, gradually giving way to a sterile era of increasingly confused and intellectually soft dogma and misplaced sentimentality masquerading as tolerance and inclusivity. Mainstream, and even many evangelical, churches have abandoned Christ's clear command to be in the world but not of it, and the call for Christians to be "as wise as serpents and as innocent as doves" has been warped by a pharisaical clergy, as dull as asses and as cowardly as chickens. Today, Western culture finds itself adrift in the muddy backwater of post-Christian culture, a morass of materialism and reanimated paganism, flowing more rapidly each decade toward the churning white waters and steep, rock-strewn falls of global socialism.

This is not to say that Christian culture had been completely moribund since the late 19th century. Despite its waning influence, such figures as G.K. Chesterton, J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, Dorothy Sayers, Thomas Mann, and Malcolm Muggeridge, to name a few, rushed into the breach during the early and middle decades of the 20th century, though generally they served as defenders of a faith forgotten or apologists fighting off those who would bury her once and for all. When surveying the last 50 years or so of Western culture, we see far fewer such intellectual knights charging to defend the virtues of mother Church.

DANTE ALIGHIERI

When talking about historical Golden Ages, we seldom apply the term to Christian cultures or movements. This is perhaps because until quite recently, the moral, spiritual, and especially civilizational benefits of Christian culture were ubiquitous, self-evident, and obvious, giving rise to the most advanced and humane cultures the world had ever seen. Only now, and from the wistful vantage point of retrospection, do we perhaps have the distance to view the long march of Christian culture from outside of itself, as Western nations increasingly reject the morality, condemn the teachings, and cancel the figures who made it all possible in the first place.

How did Dante's literary masterpiece help usher in the Renaissance and transform the trajectory of Christian art and literature forever? The three parts of Dante's *Divine Comedy* — *Inferno* (Hell), *Purgatorio* (Purgatory), and *Paradiso* (Paradise, or Heaven) — bring together Christian and Classical figures, ideas, movements, and historical and mythological events that unify all past human history under the overarching arc of Judeo-Christian thought. By no means did Dante create this template out of whole cloth. Out of the miracle of the Gospels arose hundreds of great minds bent exclusively on creating a cohesive Christian culture and civilization out of close reading and careful textual commentary on scripture. This tradition can be traced from Saint Paul, who in the first century sought to frame the Christian story in

Renaissance man: A poet of deep insight and learning, Dante was a transitional figure, representing the best of Medieval thought and anticipating key aspects of the Renaissance.

MassimoMerlini/iStock/GettyImagesPlus

Birthplace of the Renaissance: Banished from his native Florence, Dante died in exile. In modern times, the city has exonerated its most famous son.

terms of dogma and evangelism for Jews as well as Greeks and Romans; to Saint Augustine, who in the late fourth and early fifth centuries reconciled nascent Christian thought with Platonism, creating a stronger intellectual link between Jerusalem and Athens; and eventually to Saint Thomas Aquinas, who in the 13th century finally established a coherent equilibrium between Christianity and the philosophical and scientific writings of no less a figure than Aristotle himself (named "the Master of the Men who know" in Canto IV of *Inferno*).

It is this often subtle and occasionally explosive shift in the *Divine Comedy* — away from pervasively scholastic Medieval unities and toward a more integrating and encompassing cosmic sense of order — that helped give rise in the West to what we may call the High Period of Christian Art and Culture. In the Middle Ages, the great works of ancient Rome were filtered through — and ultimately subordinated to — Christian lenses. Virgil's *Aeneid*, for instance, was read primarily as an allegory on various aspects of the Old and New Testaments — pagan portents foreshadowing Christian revelations — rather than as a defining artistic account of the founding, rise, and eventual triumph of the pagan Roman people and their culture. For Dante, however, the *Aeneid* was the great epic prototype. He sought not to coopt Virgil's *magnum opus* and make it conform to Christian dogma, but to create a uniquely Christian and — just as importantly — a decidedly Italian epic that surpassed the original. In so doing, he would create *ex nihilo* the first great epic poem in a newly conceived Italian literary heritage, one that could in time come to rival the best that had been written in Latin.

In choosing to write the *Comedy* in Italian, not Latin, Dante was making an international and decidedly Renaissance statement. Using common vernacular Italian for exalted epic poetry instead of time-honored Latin was a great leap forward for European Christendom, and Dante's brave gamble would stir poets across the continent to create native literatures in such languages as French, Spanish, Portuguese, German, and even, eventually, English. In the *Comedy* itself, Virgil remains Roman and his *Aeneid* a discrete work of Latin genius, despite his role as mentor and guide for Dante through Hell and parts of Purgatory. Dante the pilgrim in the story admires and loves his Roman mentor, but seeks to supersede him as a poet even as the eternal verities of his Christian epic would naturally supersede the merely human account of the founding of Rome. Virgil can only accompany Dante so far in his eschatological journey to God, and his subsequent replacement by Christian guides in *Paradise*, including Beatrice herself, is as much a cultural and artistic statement as it is a mark of theological orthodoxy.

In Canto IV of *Inferno* — the realm of Limbo, where the unbaptized and those virtuous pagans dwell who lived before the revelation of Christ — Dante encounters the five great poets of the Classical world. Homer, Horace, Ovid, and Lucan are already here; Virgil makes five as he approaches the group with Dante in tow. And, as Dante describes the scene:

> When they had talked together a short while
> They all with signs of welcome turned my way,
> Which moved my master to a kindly smile;
> And greater honour yet they did me — yea,
> Into their fellowship they deigned invite
> And make me sixth among such minds as they. (*Inferno*. Canto IV, 97-102)

This invitation to join the greatest poets from the Classical world is characteristic and highly self-flattering on the part of Dante, who receives the invitation *before* he has written his poetic account of this vision of the afterworld. The ancient poets

actually welcome Dante to their the exclusive club on the basis of what he will write in the future, not on the basis of what he has written so far.

The Classical epics of Greece and Rome are largely poems of national achievement or conquest (*Iliad*), or stories about the founding of new empires (*Aeneid*), or tales about the suffering and redemption of a person dear to the gods (*Odyssey*). Nevertheless, in both the *Odyssey* and the *Aeneid* the protagonists are required to visit the underworld — Hell — to gain precious knowledge about their future paths and, in the case of Aeneas, learn all about the great empire that his suffering and perseverance will bring into being. In each instance, the message is the same: The physical life of the body on earth is the only reality in which a person can determine, to some limited degree, his own destiny. The afterworld is a place of complete forgetfulness, where the bloodless shades of the dead lose all sense of who they were on earth, and where there is ultimately no reward for virtue or especial punishment for sin. (As Classical culture evolved across 12 centuries of Greek and Roman understanding, ideas about reward and punishment in the afterworld did eventually develop, in both depth and scope.)

Dante's *Comedy*, on the other hand, takes place entirely in the afterlife, where the consequences of human sin, virtue, and free will receive their full due, and where conscious free will (in both *Purgatorio* and *Paradiso*) continues after death to determine one's ultimate situation. In the Greek epics, the heroes were always men and women sublimely gifted with strength, wisdom, or beauty; the favor of the gods is bestowed on the elite alone, and there is very little concern for the choices and sufferings of average people. But Dante's Christian afterlife in the *Comedy* boldly highlights the idea of a merciful and loving God who supports each of His children, a world where the choices of the lowly and despised can result in great bliss or lead to consuming darkness.

After the shade of Virgil encounters the lost Dante wandering in the Wood of Error, he reminds Dante that the only way out of desolation for any lost soul requires repentance and atonement. He must undergo a trip through Hell before he can rise through Purgatory and encounter the Heavenly truths of forgiveness and redemption. Dante's frightened response to Virgil's offer shows the profound gulf between pagan notions of implacable fate and inescapable determinism, and Christian ideas about a free and unfettered will that opens the possibility of human choice to accept God's offer of divine mercy and grace:

"But how should *I* go there? Who says so? Why?

I'm not Aeneas and I am not Paul!

Who thinks me fit? Not others. And not I.

Say I submit, and go — suppose I fall

Into some folly? Though I speak but ill,

The better wisdom will construe it all."

As one who wills, and then unwills his will,

Changing his mind with every changing whim,

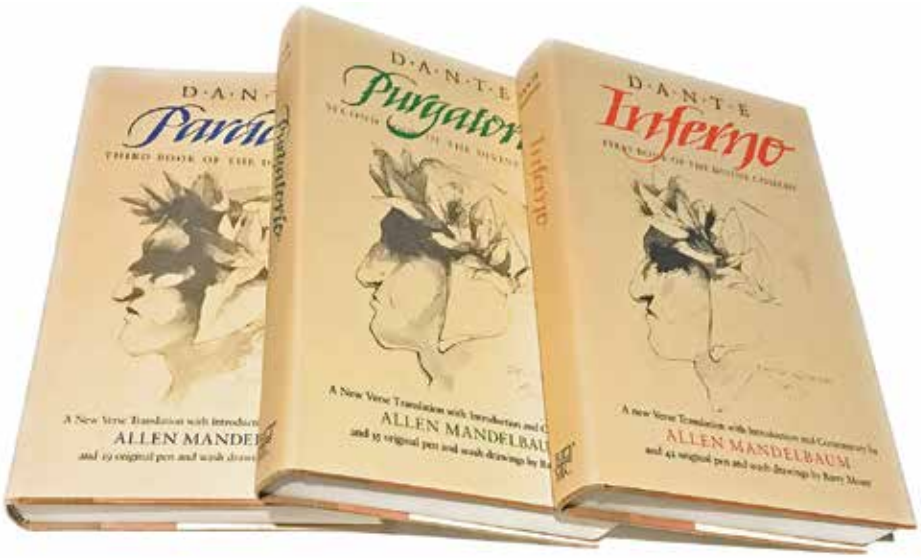
Till all his best intentions come to nil. (*Inferno,* Canto II, 31-39)

Dante is not Aeneas and not Saint Paul. He is not a Trojan demi-god like Aeneas, whose mother was no less than the goddess Venus, whose supernatural support was always present. Nor is he Saint Paul, struck down and blinded on the road to Damascus and transformed into perhaps the single most consequential Christian in human history, after the scales of doubt and disbelief fell from his eyes. Yes, even a lost and habitual sinner such as Dante warranted the same type of heavenly intervention as great heroes and saints. Dante's subsequent choice to accept the perilous journey through the afterlife was on an equal plane with Paul's, and the consequences would lead directly to grace and salvation or despair and damnation. (In an apocryphal manuscript from the fourth century titled *The Apocalypse of Paul*, which Dante read, Paul reveals his own personal vision of Hell.)

Not only does the *The Divine Comedy* reflect the intrinsic worth of every sinful human being in the eyes of God, but it also with great sensitivity "justifies the ways of God to men," as the idea was formulated in John Milton's own Christian epic, *Paradise Lost* (1667). When arriving at the gates of Hell to begin his ordeal, a terrified Dante reads the inscription carved in the lintel:

Through me the road to the city of desolation Through me the road to sorrows diuturnal, Through me the road among the lost creation.

Justice moved my great maker; God Eternal Wrought me: the power,



A real classic: Dante's *Divine Comedy* has been in print for seven centuries.

and the unsearchably High wisdom,
and the primal love supernal.
Nothing ere I was made was made
to be Save things eterne, and I eterne
abide; Lay down all hope, you that
go in by me. (*Inferno*, Canto III, 1-9)

Here before the eternal edifice of Hell we find the clarity, mercy, and even love that reveals the mind of God in action. The idea that Hell was a creation based on wisdom and love may not seem to make sense, at least from the perspective of flawed human understanding. Once again, the explanation falls back on the unique blessing of free will. In justifying His ways to mankind in this instance, God asserts that His love for us is so deep and abiding that He must allow us to be free to choose something other than Himself. If all our choices — good, bad, and indifferent — lead directly back to Him, then there can ultimately be no justice, for then there is no distinction and no consequence between those who choose good and those who choose evil. If our every choice simply returns us to God's love and protection, then free will is an illusion. If free will is an illusion, then we cannot be held responsible for our actions in any case. No, free will means that God values our free choice to such an extent that He is willing to risk losing us to our own bad choices. To do otherwise is to undermine freedom, and by extension love itself, which is choice, not compulsion. Hell, then, is simply the final, fixed stage in which a human soul gets what it chooses. In the end, Hell is simply what remains after a soul refuses to choose Him.

Those cynical and material-minded readers of Dante who simply see the poetic scenery of Hell — the molten rivers, the trident-wielding demons, the frozen lake in the very depths under which the most miserable sinners are submerged and forgotten even by God Himself — have fallen into the trap. Throughout his journey, Dante repeatedly makes it clear that he is given a vision of Hell, one apprehensible to limited human understandings, a deeply detailed and imaginative hologram, but a hologram nonetheless. As a supreme poet, Dante's powerful descriptions of the physical, emotional, rational, and spiritual landscape of Hell can move readers to deep experiences of terror, empathy, or piety. But the eternal mysteries of the actual metaphysical worlds of Hell, Purgatory, and especially Paradise are simply beyond the ken of our frail senses and sinned-warped rationality.

Consider the following example taken from Canto XX of *Inferno*. Here, in the Fourth Bolgia of the Eighth Circle, Dante the pilgrim encounters the Sorcerers, a broad category of sinners that might include such con artists as magicians; readers of tarot cards, palms, and tea leaves; psychics; and even practitioners of astrology, phrenology, augury, and haruspicy; along with certain forms of witchcraft. The example of sorcery that Dante the poet chooses to visualize is the sin of fortunetelling in general. The sinners are all naked and their necks are horribly twisted and broken, so that they see only behind, not in front of themselves, and this torment means they can only walk backward as well. Here is Dante's poetic description of the sin and its punishment:

And, Reader, so God give thee grace
to glean
Profit of my book, think if I could
be left
Dry-eyed, when close before me I
had seen
Our image so distorted, so bereft
Of dignity, that their eyes' brimming pools
Spilled down to bathe the buttocks
at the cleft.
Truly I wept, leaned on the pinnacles
Of the hard rock; until my guide
said, "Why!
And art thou too like all the other
fools?
Here pity, or here piety, must die
If the other lives; who's wickeder
than one
That's agonized by God's high equity? (*Inferno*, Canto XX, 19-30)

SalvatoreLeanza/iStock/GettyImagesPlus

Rest in peace: The Tomb of Dante in Ravenna, Italy, where Dante died in exile. The monument is surrounded by a *zona dantesca*, in which all visitors must remain silent and respectful.

The image is graphic and horrifying, and yet also rational, appropriate, and brilliantly conceived. Dante the poet has deftly highlighted one key aspect of the sin of fortunetelling: These miserable wretches engaged in a form of overweening hubris or pride — the most dangerous of the Seven Deadly Sins. Rather than be content to see as all humans do, neck up, eyes forward, and with all the limited capacities of human vision, they instead sought illicit means (usually demonic) to see into the future, a prescience belonging rightly to God alone. The detail of the bitter tears cascading perversely down the backs of their bodies and pooling between the buttocks as they walk in reverse is arresting. It's almost as if Dante, borrowing a trope from our own contemporary lexicon, is suggesting that these sinners "have it all ass-backwards."

The genius of Dante the poet's unforgettable illustration of the consequences of fortunetelling is highlighted in the way that the

punishments always mirror the nature of the sin itself, "mirrored" in the sense of a reversed and therefore backward and false image. By definition, of course, Hell is a place of false and misleading images, and Dante the pilgrim is constantly falling for the illusion. Notice how his reaction to the horrible scene is a major mistake, one that endangers his very soul. Rather than be revolted by the behavior that gave rise to such punishment, Dante instead laments the indignity that such consequences impose on the human form, a deeply misplaced empathy that has him weeping along with the sinners. Ultimately, he is weeping for the injustice of their torment, not the evil sin that gave rise to it.

At this grave misstep, Virgil pounces, exclaiming that Dante is no better than "all the other fools" whose bogus empathy aligns them with the sinners and against the justice of God:

> Here pity, or here piety, must die
> If the other lives; whose wickeder than one
> That's agonized by God's high equity.

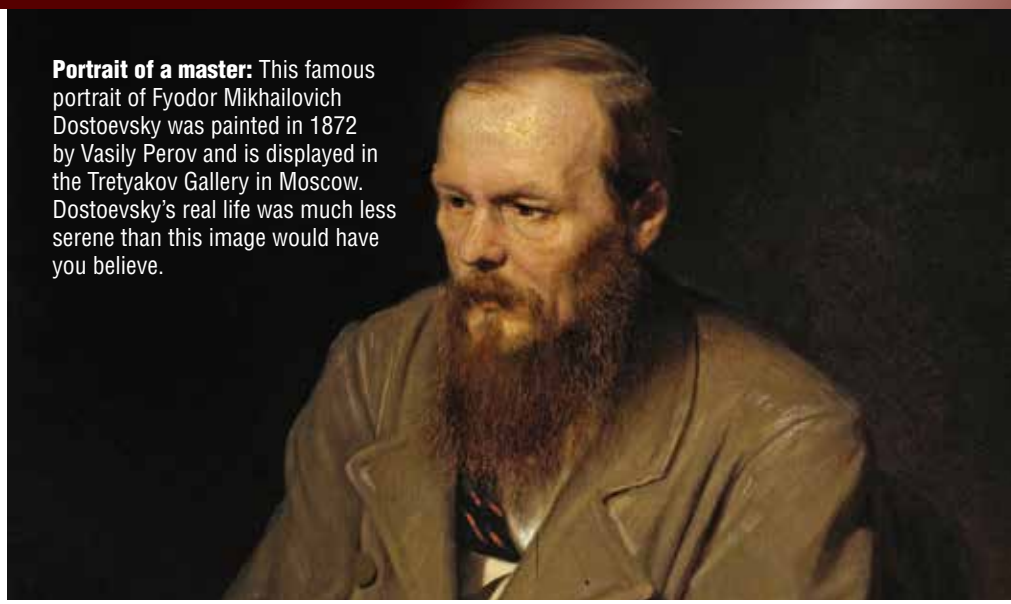
Dante, lost as he was in the Wood of Error, was sent to Hell to learn to recognize sin, not make excuses for it. And once recognized, sin must be hated and shunned, not accommodated. But Hell is precisely the place to make these all-too-human mistakes, and the deeper Dante travels through the bowels of the underworld, the more he learns. By design, Hell is a place of despair, not hope. And the sinning souls that Dante encounters here are no longer creatures of hope because they are no longer beings who possess free will. It is a maxim in Dante's *Inferno* that the sinner cannot retain in the afterlife that which was acquired or perverted by sinful means. More than anything else, the choices that ultimately bring people to Hell are the choices that abuse free will most of all. Dante's subsequent journeys up Mount Purgatory and into the heavenly realms reap more positive lessons, for both Purgatory and Paradise remain places of hope where free will and the desire to rise make all the difference.

Dante's masterful *Divine Comedy* surveys Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise across theological, philosophical, historical, cultural, artistic, and eschatological traditions, ushering in a remarkable 500-year era of high art and cultural imagination celebrating the foundational ideas and emotions generated by Christianity and the varied and diverse ways that Christians worshipped, celebrated, survived, and flourished across Europe and, increasingly, the world. Dante's vision of Christianity in the *Comedy* dramatically expands our understanding of God and man, both anticipating and inaugurating what historians broadly call the Renaissance.

To this very day, our interactions with the Bible, the Gospels, and Christian dogma across denominational lines have been indelibly influenced by the language, the intellect, the psychology, and the theology incorporated in these magisterial poems. So much so that our debt to Dante is still being paid. The Italians continue to refer to him as *Il Somma Poeta* (the Supreme Poet). In 1921, to honor the 600th anniversary of Dante's death, Pope Benedict XV wrote the encyclical *In praeclara summorum*, naming Dante one "of the many celebrated geniuses of whom the Catholic faith can boast" and the "pride and glory of humanity." In 2008, the case of Dante's banishment was reopened in Florence, and a motion passed rescinding his sentence and extending a posthumous apology. In 2021, the 700th anniversary of Dante's death, an actual retrial was held in Florence, clearing Dante's name of all civic wrongdoing, once and for all. ■

FYODOR DOSTOEVSKY

By Fyodor Dostoevsky's birth in 1821, Western Europe had survived both the Enlightenment and Romanticism. The former movement had increasingly deified reason at the expense of Christianity, culminating in Deism and a series of bloody revolutions; the latter movement had increasingly deified Nature, also at the expense of Christianity, culminating in a revival of paganism and the subordination of the Divine to the prison of materialism. Both movements, remarkably, could rightly claim the rise, apotheosis, and fall of Napoleon comfortably within the bounds of their own precepts. And both movements, ultimately grounded in materialist philosophy, served as perfect petri dishes out of which to nur-



Portrait of a master: This famous portrait of Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoevsky was painted in 1872 by Vasily Perov and is displayed in the Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow. Dostoevsky's real life was much less serene than this image would have you believe.

ture the rise of materialist thinkers such as Marx, Darwin, Nietzsche, and Freud.

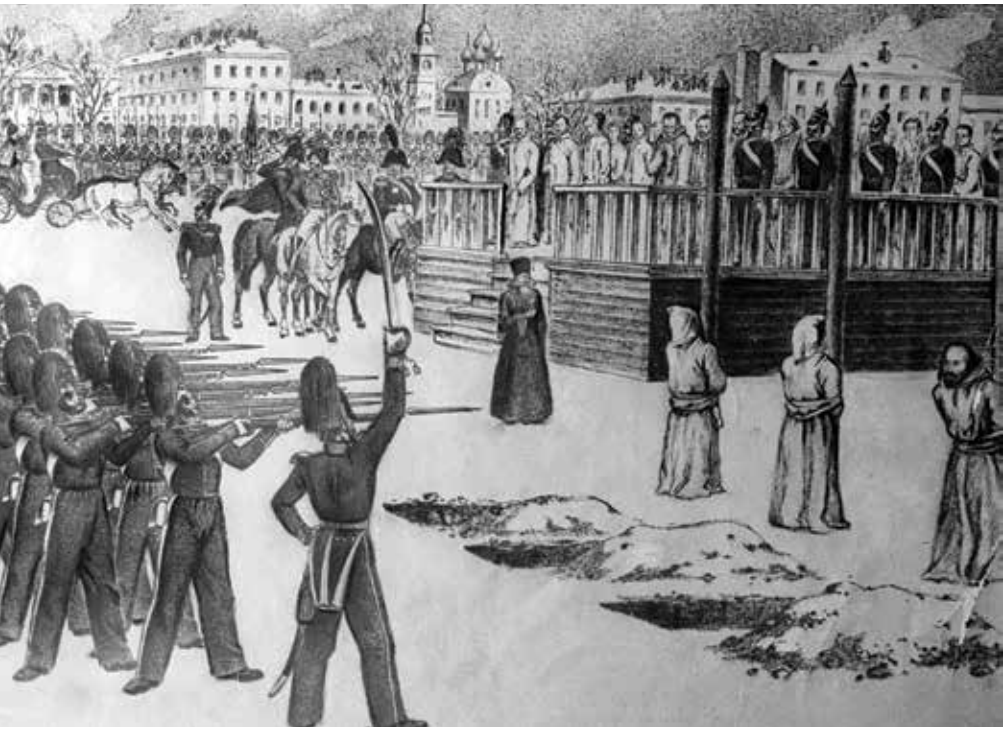
As we saw above, Dante appeared at a critical moment between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, a time when the clash of tradition and the clamor for progress required an extraordinary individual to make sense of what was waning and what was waxing, and how best to discern which threads of culture to draw forward through the eye of the needle and which to leave behind. So too was Dostoevsky perfectly suited to address the ideological cataclysms of his world and help classify the wheat and the chaff for future generations. In many ways, the Renaissance that Dante influenced was the same Renaissance facing Russia in the 19th century. As a cultural event, the European Renaissance became self-aware in Italy during the period of Dante's life (1265-1321). Over the next three centuries, evolving Renaissance ideals swept across Europe. Between the 14th and mid-17th centuries, it had spread from Italy to Spain, France, Germany, Scandinavia, and Eastern Europe.

But Russia, with one foot in easternmost Europe and another in Asia, lagged centuries behind her European peers. It was not until 1703, when Peter the Great established St. Petersburg and opened the fabled "Window to the West," that Russian culture began evolving along the lines of Western Europe. When Russia's Renaissance fully emerged in the 19th century, its genius was in Classical music and literature: Alexander Pushkin, the Russian Shakespeare, died when Dostoevsky was 16, and in his wake came artists including Gogol, Turgenev, Lermontov, Herzen, Nekrasov, Belinski, Chekov, and Tolstoy. This burgeoning literary culture was deeply concerned with Westernization — the rapid influx of scientific, political, and philosophical ideas from Western Europe — and how these ideas undermined traditional Russian values while forcing the country to modernize its political, social, and industrial frameworks. In 1848, when Marx and Engels wrote *The Communist Manifesto*, Dostoevsky was an earnest 27-year-old writer with revolutionary sympathies, heavily involved in progressive causes that sought to reshape Russian culture in the direction of an increasingly atheist and materialist West.

For Dostoevsky, the bell struck in April 1849 when the Petrashevsky Circle — a literary group of progressive intellectuals living in St. Petersburg — was raided and 35 members, including Dostoevsky, were arrested by the tsar's police. Dostoevsky was accused of possessing an illegal printing press and distributing anti-government propaganda. He was also charged with a plot to overthrow Tsar Nicholas I. After spending eight months in subhuman conditions at the St. Peter and Paul Fortress, he and 21 confederates were sentenced to death by firing squad in November of 1849.

Privately, the tsar agreed to lesser sentences, including prison terms in Siberia, but he insisted the prisoners not find out about the clemency until the last possible minute. On December 22, the prisoners were transported to Semyonovsky Square to be executed. The sentence of death by firing squad was proclaimed, and the first three prisoners were tied to stakes before the firing squad. After an agonizing minute of silence, the soldiers stood down. Dostoevsky, who was in the very next threesome to be shot, describes the experience in his novel *The Idiot*: "The uncertainty and feeling of aversion for the new thing which was going to overtake him immediately, was terrible."

The mock execution had a profound effect on the prisoners. One convict who exhibited signs of strain due to the capital sentence lost what was left of his mind and lived out his days as an invalid. And as we can see in Dostoevsky's *The Idiot*, the trick affected Dostoevsky for the rest of his life, a dangerous trauma to impose upon a man already suffering from a rare form of temporal lobe epilepsy called "ecstatic epilepsy." By the time of his trial, Dostoevsky had been suffering serious seizures for at least a decade. Ecstatic seizures are rare but impactful: During the first moments, ecstatic auras give rise to feelings of well-being, serenity, bliss, and enhanced self-awareness. Ecstatic epileptic seizures are almost always felt as a positive experience, some even describe them as a mystic experience. The disease loomed large over



Death by firing squad: Dostoevsky was sentenced to death in 1849 for distributing anti-government propaganda. The tsar commuted the sentence of death, but not before Dostoevsky and other prisoners were subjected to a terrifying mock execution.

Dostoevsky's future as a novelist and defender of the faith.

Dostoevsky spent four years at hard labor in Siberia, where suffering awakened his dormant Christianity. After working alongside violent criminals of the most dangerous sort, Dostoevsky was shocked to find that these murderers and rapists — men who would cut your throat for an extra ration of bread — would nevertheless weep like children before the Holy Sacrament when it was brought into the prison every Easter and Christmas. He found through these lost but suffering convicts a regeneration of faith and empathy that turned him back to the Russian Orthodox Church.

In prison, Dostoevsky was called to live his Christianity every day. He was brutally beaten for making a complaint on behalf of his fellow prisoners, protesting a lump of filth found in the soup. He endured a second horrific beating for saving the life of a fellow prisoner after the officer in charge forbade him to do so. This second beating — categorized as an "execution" — was so vicious that he was taken to the hospital. The entire camp believed him dead. Six weeks later, when the "dead" man left the hospital and returned to camp life, his shocked fellow convicts gave him the nickname "the deceased."

Ten years after his exile, Dostoevsky moved to St. Petersburg and began writing the novels that would push back at the highest levels against the atheism and materialism undermining Russian civilization and warping Western culture. His flirtation with socialism as a young radical gave way to the voice of a prophet, taking on the materialism of Marx and atheism of Nietzsche with the zeal of Elijah. Dostoevsky was one of the first existentialist writers — a type of philosophical writing that emphasizes the individual as a free and responsible agent, capable of determining his development through acts of will. He not only demonstrated that our walk in this world is analogous to that of Dante's in the afterworld, but also endured a type of transformational death and resurrection in the Siberian gulag, where he sacrificed his life for another, only to be resurrected and restored to life.

Scholars have suggested that Dostoevsky's masterpiece, *The Brothers Karamazov* (1881), contains all the wisdom and insight of his earlier novels — and so much surpassing them — that one need only read *Karamazov* to get the complete scope of Dostoevsky's genius. While this may be true, it is also true that most readers are not equipped to tackle *Karamazov* without first progressing through his lesser works, much as Dante could not understand Heaven without having first experienced Hell and Purgatory.

Rostislaw/iStock/GettyImagesPlus

Window to the West: St. Petersburg, Russia, was commissioned by Peter the Great in 1703. Dostoevsky was critical of Westernization, and warned about the negative influences of European atheism and socialism.

In *Karamazov*, each character — besides being fully human — represents one or more worldviews or philosophical positions. The trick is to determine for each character the major idea that drives behavior. Only then will you have a chance to determine who murders Fyodor Pavlovich Karamazov, the father of the brothers. Fyodor Pavlovich represents hedonism — the idea that if there is no God or afterlife, then the only logical thing to live for is pleasure, like a pampered animal. Speaking to his youngest son Alexei, the old man opines:

> I, my dearest Alexei Fyodorovich, plan to live on this earth as long as possible … and therefore I need every kopeck, and the longer I live, the more I'll need it…. At the moment I'm still a man, only fifty-five years old, but I want to occupy that position for about twenty years longer; I'll get old and disgusting and [the young girls] won't come to me then of their own free will, and that's when I'll need my dear money. So now I'm saving up more and more, for myself alone…. Because let it be known to you that I want to live in wickedness to the very end. Wickedness is sweet: everyone denounces it, but everyone lives in it, only they all do it on the sly and I do it openly.

Given his disbelief in God and the afterworld — "I say a man falls asleep and doesn't wake up, and that's all" — there is a grim honesty to his selfish materialism, and the pursuit of lust and greed are consistent with a world in which people are not held accountable for their behavior once they are dead.

The three Karamazov brothers — Dmitri, Ivan, and Alexei — represent ideas that produce in them and others a sense of Hell, Purgatory, or Heaven. The oldest

The thrust of *The Divine Comedy* drives us closer and closer to the throne of God, where such sacrificial love is both self-evident and eminently "rational." Dostoevsky, as we have seen, built his entire defense of Christianity around the idea as well.

brother, Dmitri, is a slave to emotion, unable to control himself in the heat of the moment. Driven by passion, Dmitri is a prime suspect for the murder because he has two issues that tax his emotional nature to the extreme. First, the broke Dmitri believes his father stole his inheritance from his late mother; and second, they are both in love with same venal woman, Grushenka, who is perhaps willing to sell herself to the highest bidder. While talking to his younger brother Alexei, he is asked what he will do if he catches Grushenka heading to his father's house. Dmitri responds, "I'll kill. I couldn't endure that.… The old man. I wouldn't kill her." He continues:

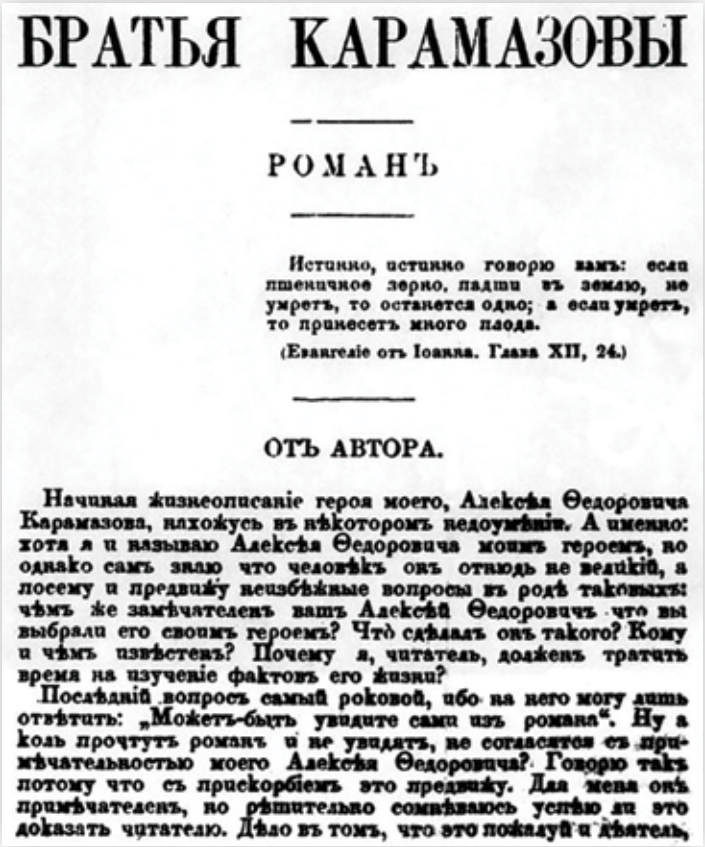
> I don't know, I don't know.… Maybe I won't kill him, and maybe I will. I'm afraid that at that moment his face will suddenly become hateful to me. I hate his Adam's apple, his nose, his eyes, his shameless sneer. I feel a personal loathing. I'm afraid of that. I may not be able to help myself.

As prone to violence as he is to irrational sacrifices in the name of love, Dmitri swings wildly between exhilaration and despair, carrying in his own breast a Purgatory of irreconcilable and unmanageable emotions.

The middle brother, Ivan, is the walking representation of reason. So deeply rational is he that he confuses other reason-driven characters who don't have his breadth. As a very young man, he wrote an extremely influential article about the possibility of God's existence. The argument was so complex that both believers and atheists claimed victory. In Ivan, Dostoevsky creates a mind so profoundly rational that he is stuck in a paradox. Ivan understands clearly that, from a rational perspective, God must exist or nothing makes sense and everything is permissible, "even cannibalism." Ivan is quick to accede to the truth of Voltaire's maxim: "If God did not exist, mankind would have had to invent Him," or human civilization itself could never have materialized.

And yet it's Ivan's very rationalism — his need for material proof — that torments him, for without material proof reason alone cannot consent to belief. Reason won't allow it. Talking about suffering, Ivan argues that whatever God can do by way of forgiveness, He cannot "make it up" to a little child who was tortured and murdered by her own parents:

> Is there in the whole world a being who would have the right to forgive and could forgive? I don't want harmony. From love for humanity I don't want it. I would rather be left with the unavenged suffering. I would rather remain with my unavenged suffering and unsatisfied indignation, even if I were wrong. Besides, too high a price is asked for harmony; it's beyond our means to pay so much to enter on it. And so I hasten to give back my entrance ticket, and if I am an honest man I am bound to give it back as soon as possible. And that I am doing. It's not God that I don't accept, Alyosha [Alexei], only I most respectfully return him the ticket.



БРАТЬЯ КАРАМАЗОВЫ

РОМАНЪ

Истинно, истинно говорю вамъ: если пшеничное зерно, падши въ землю, не умретъ, то останется одно; а если умретъ, то принесетъ много плода.

(Евангеліе отъ Іоанна. Глава XII, 24.)

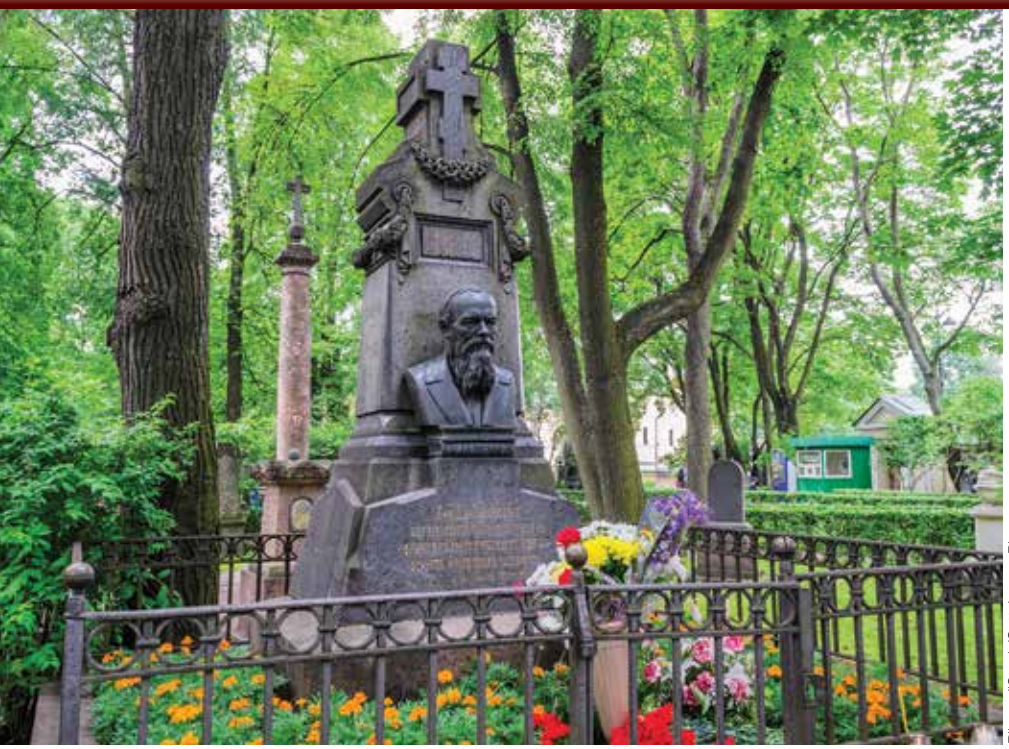
ОТЪ АВТОРА.

Начиная жизнеописаніе героя моего, Алексѣя Ѳедоровича Карамазова, нахожусь въ нѣкоторомъ недоумѣніи. А именно: хотя я и называю Алексѣя Ѳедоровича моимъ героемъ, но однако самъ знаю что человѣкъ онъ отнюдь не великій, а посему и предвижу неизбѣжные вопросы въ родѣ такихъ: чѣмъ же замѣчателенъ вашъ Алексѣй Ѳедоровичъ что вы выбрали его своимъ героемъ? Что̀ сдѣлалъ онъ такого? Кому и чѣмъ извѣстенъ? Почему я, читатель, долженъ тратить время на изученіе фактовъ его жизни?

Послѣдній вопросъ самый роковой, ибо на него могу лишь отвѣтить: „Можетъ-быть увидите сами изъ романа". Ну а коль прочтутъ романъ и не увидятъ, не согласятся съ примѣчательностью моего Алексѣя Ѳедоровича? Говорю такъ потому что съ прискорбіемъ это предвижу. Для меня онъ примѣчателенъ, но рѣшительно сомнѣваюсь успѣю ли это доказать читателю. Дѣло въ томъ, что это пожалуй и дѣятель,

A classic: The first page of *The Brothers Karamazov*, originally published as a serial in *The Russian Messenger* from January 1879 to November 1880. Dostoevsky died less than four months after its publication.

This is existentialism that cuts closest to the bone. God may be able to forgive the murderous parents; He may even be able to distract the child who suffered with endless joys. But neither He nor anyone else can restore what was taken from that suffering child. And, Ivan reasons, if there is something out there that can pay such a debt and wipe such a slate clean, it is clearly too far beyond the limits of human reason to comprehend it. And if that type of restoration can be made, but cannot be made understandable to Ivan's hyper-ratio-



Blincov/iStock/GettyImagesPlus

A fruitful legacy: Dostoevsky's grave, bearing the following inscription: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." (John 12:24)

nal, three-dimensional mind, then Ivan is under no obligation to simply have "faith." No, indeed — Ivan returns his ticket and disavows all belief so deeply divorced from rational understanding.

It is, of course, Alexei Karamazov to whom Ivan is talking. Alexei is the youngest Karamazov and the character embodying all the innocence, sincerity, and selfless love that comes from ardent faith. Alexei understands how deeply Ivan suffers from his inability to believe in God, despite the logical necessity of doing so, a position that ironically aligns Ivan with Satan himself, who visits Ivan in a "dream" later in the novel. Alexei's response to Ivan is profound: "I think everyone must love life more than anything else in the world." Ivan responds as reason itself must: "Love life more than the meaning of it?" Alexei explains:

> Yes, certainly. Love it regardless of logic, as you say. Yes, most certainly regardless of logic, for only then will I grasp its meaning. That's what I've been vaguely aware of for a long time. Half your work is done, Ivan: you love life. Now you must try to do the second half and you are saved.

Alexei knows that love is greater than logic and reason. Indeed, in our increasingly materialist Western culture, the more we seek to replace love — especially "irrational," self-sacrificial love such as the love of Christ, where the strong and powerful subordinate themselves to the weak and suffering — the more we devalue life at every level, from the unborn to the very aged. By measuring faith by selfless love, and not by data or empirical calculation, we come to realize quite rationally that sacrificial love is not irrational love. Sacrificial love is rather *supra*-rational love, a type of logic that only makes sense in a universe where the *motive* behind God's creation was love of the other, and the mere *means* of that creation an exercise in materialist logic.

In *The Brothers Karamazov*, the only character whose faith is deeper and more time-tested than that of Alexei is the Elder Zosima — Alexei's mentor and spiritual guide. Zosima's death triggers Alexei's own trial of faith. Before the aged monk dies, he delivers a long reflection in which he expands on the idea of active and passive love. Passive love is abstract, divorced from action and sacrifice. This type of love is ubiquitous in our materialistic culture. Passive love says you are a good person if you simply vote a certain way, or adopt "correct" views about the right people and issues, or if you are a member in good standing of the right political party. It is virtue-signaling without any virtue or sacrifice made on anyone else's behalf. It is very much the type of "love" you see in socialist countries, where acts of private charity are eschewed and all choice in distribution belongs to the state alone; a world where free will and choice vanish before central planning and rational sustainability.

Zosima defines active love, on the other hand, as "labor and perseverance, and for some people, perhaps, a whole science":

> Try to love your neighbors actively and tirelessly. The more you succeed in loving, the more you'll be convinced of the existence of God and the immortality of your soul. And if you reach complete selflessness in the love of your neighbor, then undoubtedly you will believe, and no doubt will even be able to enter your soul. This has been tested. It is certain.

***

This indeed is the only way we can return America and the West to anything like a genuinely Christian culture. Dante knew this. The thrust of *The Divine Comedy* drives us closer and closer to the throne of God, where such sacrificial love is both self-evident and eminently "rational." Dostoevsky, as we have seen, built his entire defense of Christianity around the idea as well. This is not to say that during the years between 1321 and 1821 we accomplished the goal — far from it. But for that 500-year period, from Dante to Dostoevsky, the pieces were in place, the cultural landscape was propitious, and our children were nurtured on the great books of Western culture. It's all right there if we stop canceling and start reading them again. ■

CUSTOM STEEL FABRICATION

AGI
ACTION GROUP INCORPORATED

QUALITY ... ON TIME

614.328.8450
actiongroupinc.com

Pence Walnut Plantation
and Hensler Nursery, Inc.

Now offering for sale

"Pence Select"

Walnut Seedlings

The 44,000 trees planted in 1989 are from a highly diverse genetic pool. The seedlings available to you will be from nuts gathered from the best 200 trees!

This is an exceptional opportunity to secure superior quality Black Walnut seedlings!

For more information contact:

Hugh B. Pence

1420 Adams St. • Lafayette, IN 47905
Ph: (765) 742-4269
Fax: (765) 742-6667
E-mail: hughbpence@cs.com

One of many 27-year-old *Superb* trees

ARTHUR
ENGINEERING, LLC
SYLVANIA, GEORGIA

Engineering consulting for manufacturing, chemical plants, oil + gas and industry.

- Project Management
- Process Engineering
- Electrical and Instrumentation Engineering
- Mechanical Engineering
- 3D Laser Scanning
- Structural Engineering

Also commercial MEP engineering. Licenced in 24 states and we travel!

1006 Millen Highway, Sylvania, GA 30467

Phone: (912) 499-1600 www.Arthur-Engineering.com info@arthur-engineering.com

The Great Sorting Out

Bloomberg News reported on November 18 about how registered Republicans in Florida now outnumber Democrats. As recently as 2008, Democrats had an enrollment advantage of roughly 700,000, but as of the end of October 2021, Republicans took the lead by around 4,000. Florida has always been a popular destination for retiring Baby Boomers who trend Republican, but it has also attracted younger, working-age people seeking to escape onerous COVID restrictions in Democrat-controlled states. Political observers are still waiting to see how these changes impact future presidential elections as Florida transitions from a blue-leaning swing state to potentially a solid red state.

These changes in political affiliation are not limited to Florida, as other parts of the country have seen sizable migratory shifts in their population in the post-COVID era. These changes also involve gun manufacturers. The Daily Wire reported on October 2 that Smith & Wesson will move its corporate headquarters from Massachusetts to Tennessee. The company has been based in Springfield, Massachusetts, since 1852, but will now relocate its company leadership and significant amounts of its operations to Maryville, Tennessee. "After an exhaustive and thorough analysis, for the continued health and strength of our iconic company, we feel that we have been left with no other alternative," Smith & Wesson CEO Mark Smith explained in a press release. Smith cited Tennessee's "unwavering support of the Second Amendment" as part of their rationale for the move.

The Smith & Wesson CEO mentioned an expanded "assault-weapons" ban currently being proposed in the Massachusetts State Legislature, as well as other potential anti-gun laws, as to why his company was left with no choice but to relocate. "These bills would prevent Smith & Wesson from manufacturing firearms that are legal in almost every state in America and that are safely used by tens of millions of law-abiding citizens every day exercising their Constitutional 2nd Amendment rights, protecting themselves and their families, and enjoying the shooting sports," the CEO wrote in his press release. Smith also criticized the proposed legislation as "arbitrary and capricious," and wrote that, if enacted, such laws would ban products that accounted for over 60 percent of the company's revenue in 2020.

This major move comes after the National Rifle Association announced earlier this year that it would be leaving similarly anti-gun New York and relocating to Texas. Likewise, as The Blaze reported on September 30, another "firearms company, Troy Industries, cited the 'changing climate' for the gun industry in Massachusetts when it announced a move in May from West Springfield, Massachusetts, to Clarksville, Tennessee."

There was a report by the Associated Press on November 8 that Remington Firearms is moving from Ilion, New York, to Georgia, southwest of Atlanta. Remington is the country's oldest gun maker, dating back to 1816. "We are very excited to come to Georgia, a state that not only welcomes business but enthusiastically supports and welcomes companies in the firearms industry," Remington CEO Ken D'Arcy wrote in a press release.

These high-profile moves are just a sampling of major changes taking place in the firearms industry, as the United States seems to be experiencing a "sorting out" that will likely have political implications for years to come.

Never Leave Your Car Running and Unlocked

Breaking911.com reported on October 28 about an attempted robbery in Nashville, Tennessee, that didn't go according to plan because the intended victim was armed. A man drove his car up to a convenience store and left it running outside while he ran inside to buy something. Leaving a running car unlocked is never wise, because criminals might get the idea that they can quickly slip into your vehicle and steal it, and that's exactly what almost happened. While the car owner was in the store, a 20-year-old man climbed into the driver's seat of the running vehicle and tried driving away. The car owner exited the store, saw the suspect stealing his car, and confronted the car thief. The car owner clung onto the driver's side door as the suspect began driving away, but the thief accidentally crashed the car into another vehicle in the parking lot. The car owner was armed and pulled out his handgun, pointed it at the suspect, and detained him for police. The suspect's accomplice, who had driven him there, physically attacked the car owner, but then fled on foot when the car owner fired at him. Law enforcement soon arrived and took the suspect into custody, where he was jailed on criminal charges including auto theft, aggravated assault, possession of burglary tools, evading arrest, and resisting arrest, with his bond set at $40,000. Police are still searching for the accomplice.

Died After a Week

WTOL.com reported on August 20 about a male intruder who was mortally wounded shortly after breaking in to a residence in south Toledo, Ohio. Police are still investigating, but they believe the suspect forced his way into a woman's house around 1:00 a.m. in an attempt to burglarize the home. The female resident opened fire on the suspect shortly after he broke in and seriously wounded him. The injured man turned and retreated from the house, but collapsed outside on the front lawn. The woman called 911, and responding EMTs discovered the wounded suspect injured on the scene and transported him to a nearby medical facility. The intruder received medical treatment for a week before he finally succumbed to his injuries, and the Lucas County Coroner's Office's autopsy concluded the suspect died "from multiple gunshot wounds." Investigators believe the man was trying to burglarize the house, but the woman's fast action and her gun saved the day. ■

— Patrick Krey

How Can I Make a Difference?

GETTING STARTED IS AS EASY AS 1,2,3.

1. **Sign up for JBS news and action alerts**
   - Stay informed with free content
   - Visit www.JBS.org/e-newsletter to sign up now
2. **Contact your elected representatives**
   - Local, state, and federal officials represent you
   - Visit www.JBS.org/act-now for contact information
3. **Join The John Birch Society**
   - National concerted action multiplies your impact
   - Visit www.JBS.org/join to apply for membership today

The John Birch Society

Appleton, WI 54912-8040 • (920) 749-3780 • JBS.org

"Less government, more responsibility, and — with God's help — a better world."

JBS

Containerized Storage From
The People Who Invented The Concept

MARTIN

CONTAINER, INC.

Serving You Since 1976

Straight From the Harbor to Your Site
Refrigerated Units Always Available

LENGTHS UP TO 45'
24-HOUR DELIVERY
BUY OR RENT

REFRIGERATOR/FREEZERS ALSO AVAILABLE

www.container.com

1-800-221-3727

Kenosha Jury Acquits, Despite Fears, Intimidation

Anyone who saw video of Kyle Rittenhouse's gritty battle against four leftist goons during the Jacob Blake riots in Kenosha, Wisconsin, knew he was innocent of murder. That Rittenhouse had defended himself had always been clear since August 25 of last year, the night the four attacked him.

Prosecutors knew it too, and though they surely knew they shouldn't have charged him, the leftists bayed for blood, and so the authorities filed two homicide charges and two reckless endangering charges against the then-17-year-old from Antioch, Illinois.

Fifteen months later, the jury spoke. Rittenhouse prevailed.

So score one for truth, justice, and the American way, as the narrator said in the old *Superman* television series. Unafraid despite threats against him and his family, and despite threats of violence not only on social media but also outside the courthouse, Judge Bruce Schroeder presided fairly and ruled evenhandedly, while the jury deliberated at length for almost four full days before rendering not-guilty verdicts, which might have infuriated leftist opinion more than the shootings. How dare you, leftists steamed, permit a white man to defend himself against the communist mob that was burning down Kenosha.

To their everlasting credit, judge and jury sent a message: Communist mobs will not burn and loot our cities with impunity. Nor will those criminals chase down, brutalize, or even murder with impunity those who use force — sometimes deadly force — to protect lives and property, friends and family.

America became a little safer because of Judge Schroeder and the still-anonymous jurors whose verdict confirmed that self-defense is still legal. The outcome should also restore at least a little faith in our system of justice, which works when the guilty are found guilty and the innocent are found innocent, and that system fortifies two of the basic rights that every American citizen has enjoyed since the 18th century: the right to fair jury trial, and the freedom to defend oneself and one's family from malefactors bent on mayhem and murder.

The Judge

The first sign that Schroeder would ensure a fair trial was his ruling that prosecutors could not call those criminals "victims," a standard practice in his courtroom and among other judges. After all, he said, they aren't "victims" until a crime has been proved, and that wouldn't be the case until jurors rendered verdicts. The move infuriated leftists.

Nor were they happy when Schroeder chastised lead prosecutor Thomas Binger for asking Rittenhouse, on cross-examination, about his silence after the arrest, as was his right under the Fifth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. "I was astonished," Schroeder said, because "that's basic law, it's been basic law in the country for 40 years, 50 years." Schroeder also erupted in fury when Binger tried to introduce evidence that Schroeder had already ruled out of bounds.

He also criticized so-called legal experts in the leftist media who thought it odd that he didn't rule on a defense motion to dis-

Defense Attorney Corey Chirafisi and Kyle Rittenhouse after the not guilty verdicts were read

AP Images

miss the case before prosecutors had a chance to respond. During that discussion, he offered a history lesson about why the framers of the Constitution included a provision for a defendant to be tried by a jury of his peers.

"These are intelligent people," Schroeder began:

> There was a time when the educated people in the town were the physician, and the lawyer, and maybe the school teacher and the preacher, and the rest of the people were farmers, so obviously they weren't as smart as those educated people, right? Wrong. That's never been the belief of the founders of our country. It's never been true. And I think these people are as competent as the educated people, and many of them are educated, to make these decisions. And that's where the founders of our country put the power, not with us.

AP Images

Bruce Schroeder

When the jury returned with not-guilty verdicts, Schroeder simply said that it had done its job as the Founders intended: seriously, and with grim determination to arrive at the right verdict.

"Your job is done," Schroeder said. "Without commenting on your verdict — the verdicts themselves — just in terms of your attentiveness and the cooperation that you gave to us justifies the confidence that the founders of our country placed in you."

To his credit, Schroeder let neither the angry hysterics of the communist mob outside the courtroom, nor the communist mob on Twitter, nor the communists who threatened him in e-mails, deter him from his duty. Instead, he promised they would pay for the threats.

The Jury

The jury stood tall, too, against the angry mob outside. Jurors began deliberations at 9 a.m. on November 16 and deliberated for three full days, then delivered a verdict in the morning of November 19.

Understandably, those who thought Rittenhouse was unjustly accused — that he clearly defended himself — worried that the jury would convict him. Jurors asked the judge for a copy of a few pages of his instructions, and two violent goons who protested outside the courthouse, just a few feet away from where jurors mulled the case, landed in jail. Worse still, cops caught an MSNBC producer trying to follow the jury bus when he ran a red light to keep up. The purpose: threaten to, if not actually, identify the jurors. Knowing that their names and faces went public might cause the jury to be too terrified to acquit.

Yet even without that happening, the jurors surely knew the backlash that could be expected if they decided the "wrong" way.

So long was the deliberation that columnist Ann Coulter said the jurors might make those who acquitted O.J. Simpson of murders he obviously committed look like Nobel laureates. Pro-Rittenhouse Twitter surmised that the jurors were afraid to find Rittenhouse not guilty, that they feared communist goons would kill them, or burn Kenosha to the ground unless they rendered the verdict the mob wanted.

The fears were groundless.

"The jury here did exactly as it was designed," liberal law professor Jonathan Turley said. "The jury is supposed to stand between the government and the citizen, between a mob and a defendant. They are tasked with doing dispassionate justice. That's what happened here."

Indeed. Prosecutors overcharged Rittenhouse, as Turley said, and tried to railroad him. They claimed Rittenhouse provoked the men who attacked him, and attempted to portray him as a liar and cop wannabe, a dangerous kid with an illegal rifle who crossed state lines to shoot people. It was almost as if Binger had commentators on MSNBC prepare his case. Prosecutors also withheld evidence from the defense, and purposely tried to provoke a mistrial when their case began collapsing, Rittenhouse's attorneys argued. A mistrial would give them another chance to try him. The leftist media smeared him 24-7-365 from August 25, 2020, through the trial, and after the verdict, insisting without evidence that he was a "racist" and "white supremacist," even though race had nothing do with the case. So did Twitter's volcanic Bolsheviks, who fumed that Rittenhouse must be lynched.

Jurors saw through the lies to the truth. They heard the prosecutors' own witnesses fortify Rittenhouse's claim of self-defense. They heard Rittenhouse testify. He was a kid who went to Kenosha to clean up the wreckage the demonic rioters caused and help protect the town where he worked, and where his family and friends lived.

He did what the elected and public officials failed to do. The jury saw that, and acted accordingly. ■

— R. Cort Kirkwood

BLOW MOLDING SPECIALISTS

CONFER plastics inc.

Confer Plastics has been proudly making all of our products in the United States since 1973.

MADE IN THE USA

More than 200 people work at our factory near Niagara Falls, New York where they operate some of the largest blow molding machines in the world to make durable consumer products that you are likely familiar with.

PROPRIETARY PRODUCTS

The pool & spa industry is an important part of who we are and what we do. Our Confer-branded products - like **ladders, steps, and spa cabinets** - are beloved in the industry. We have a strong reputation of providing innovative goods of the highest quality that **allow families to get the most enjoyment out of their backyard**.

CUSTOM BLOW MOLDING

As a **custom manufacturer**, we have helped countless inventors and entrepreneurs achieve their American Dream by allowing them to **transform their ideas into reality**.

To learn more about us, visit our website at **www.ConferPlastics.com**

- **Confer Plastics Headquarters**
  97 Witmer Road
  North Tonawanda, NY 14120-2421
- **Confer Plastics Distribution Center**
  2107 Liberty Drive
  Niagara Falls, NY 14304

CONFER INNOVATIONS

Kayaks and Paddleboards

We helped to develop one of the very first blow-molded kayaks.

The Living Hinge

In the 1960s, Ray Confer invented the living hinge that is used on almost every tool case and tackle box the world over.

Flexible Funnels

Doug Confer's flexible fuel funnel was patented in 1976 and we made hundreds of thousands of them. You will still see them in use in most every garage.

Purple Martin Gourds

Were it not for plastic gourds like this one the Purple Martin would be extinct. Over the centuries, the colorful bird evolved to need human-made birdhouses.

Pool Ladders

We've always been a leader when it comes to safety. Features such as the patented Roll-Guard enclosure on this ladder give parents the peace of mind they need to know that their children can't enter their swimming pool when it is unsupervised.

Tel: 1-800-635-3213 | **E-mail:** plastics@ConferPlastics.com | **Web:** www.ConferPlastics.com

BY R. CORT KIRKWOOD

Did Rittenhouse Prosecutor **Threaten Jury?**

Because of the many lies the media told about Kyle Rittenhouse after he shot three criminals in self-defense during last year's Jacob Blake riots in Kenosha, Wisconsin, we might easily have concluded that without conclusive video to show what happened, a jury would have convicted him. We can never know with certainty.

Thomas Binger pointing rifle at jury

AP Images

We do know the leftist media purposely misled millions of Americans about the case (see article on page 19). Those who didn't watch the trial and believe that the leftist media reports things fairly and accurately were understandably astonished by the verdict. Yet anyone who watched the trial, or major portions of it, or even those who simply saw the video, knows why the jury found Rittenhouse not guilty.

Still, the jury required some degree of courage given how the leftist media and its Twitter auxiliary, with help from top Democrats, whipped up a mindless farrago of hatred. Rittenhouse was, they told us, a white supremacist murderer. A domestic terrorist. A murdering racist.

Yet the leftist megaphone wasn't the only threat jurors had to ignore. In his closing arguments, Prosecutor Thomas Binger pointed Rittenhouse's AR-15 at them.

The move was meant to be dramatic, and supposedly Binger wanted to show the jury what it's like to be on the business end of a semi-automatic rifle with a military appearance.

The weapon itself was the subject of a lie that spread like the black oil virus on *The X Files*. Rittenhouse, who had no connection to Kenosha and "didn't belong there," the hate-Rittenhouse Left alleged, "crossed state lines with an illegal assault rifle."

In fact, Rittenhouse had deep ties to Kenosha. His relatives live there and he worked there. He went there to help clean up the mess rioters left, provide first aid, and, if necessary, protect businesses. More importantly, he did not carry the weapon across state lines. It was already in Kenosha, at a friend's house.

Here's how firmly attached some are to the hate-Rittenhouse narrative. Famed director and *All in the Family* actor Rob Reiner tweeted that key anti-Rittenhouse lie *five days after* the verdict.

"An underaged kid illegally takes an assault rifle across state lines," Reiner began in a tweet that called President Trump a "mentally-ill racist."

The mayor of New York said the same thing.

But forget the lies about Rittenhouse and his trusty AR-15. Binger emphasized that it was loaded with full-metal-jacket bullets, an insignificant detail clearly meant to conjure images of automatic gunfire and bloodshed, apropos of Stanley Kubrick's Vietnam War epic, *Full Metal Jacket.*

And that wasn't the only terrifying image Binger wanted jurors to see.

Now, remember what Binger did with the rifle.

The widely accepted explanation for Binger's rifle stunt is that he wanted the jury to feel the same fear as the men whom Rittenhouse shot: boy rapist Joseph Rosenbaum, convicted strangler and domestic abuser Anthony Huber — both dead — and longtime criminal Gaige Grosskreutz, whom Rittenhouse wounded. Rittenhouse fired two shots at career criminal Jump Kick Man, who kicked the then-17-year-old in the face.

And so Binger dramatically raised the rifle to his shoulder, and with his finger on the trigger, pointed it at the jury.

"The defendant comes running in, and drops the fire extinguisher on the ground," Binger said in explaining that Rittenhouse provoked Rosenbaum, "then raises his left hand to the gun and points." That provocation, Binger explained, vitiated Rittenhouse's right to self-defense.

Understandably, pro-gun social media eviscerated Binger, who broke two major commandments of firearms safety: never point a gun, loaded or unloaded, at anyone unless you intend to shoot, and don't put your finger on the trigger, just in case it's loaded, unless you intend to shoot.

"Binger is a recent graduate from the Alec Baldwin School of Firearm Safety," a joke on Twitter went. Baldwin had recently killed a co-worker on a movie set after he pointed a prop gun at her, although he claimed he didn't pull the trigger.

So a veteran prosecutor could pontificate in detail about full-metal-jacket bullets but didn't know basic gun safety. Or perhaps not. Maybe Binger knew exactly what he was doing. Maybe he was sending an unspoken message to jurors: You better not vote to acquit, or this might await you when Black Lives Matter explodes in righteous fury.

After all, Binger told the jury, "Anyone with a gun is a threat, unless you're the defendant." That would include a prosecutor.

So again, one must ask why he pointed the weapon at the jury. His case had fallen apart. His own witnesses undermined it. Maybe the only chance left to save it was a subtle threat: Don't get this wrong ... or else.

Jurors must have been tempted to duck. ■

RAFFIN
CONSTRUCTION CO.

RAFFIN
PROPERTIES

Serving the Chicagoland area for over 90 years

744 East 113th St. • Chicago, IL 60628 • (773) 785-3055

www.raffinconstruction.com

PRISM MANAGEMENT

PRISM: Any medium that resolves a seemingly simple matter into its elements

Consultants and Administrators

Specializing in Tax Deductions for Dental Practices • Post Office Box 7007 • Porter Ranch, CA 91327